This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07487008 4

L 3476

JOHN HORSLEYDOWN;

OR, THE

CONFESSIONS OF A THIEF:

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF,

AND REVISED BY

THOMAS LITTLETON HOLT.

"Virtuous and vicious all mankind must be—
Few in th' extreme, but all in the degree;
The rogue and fool, by fits, are fair and wise:
And e'en the best, by fits, what they despise."
POPE.

LONDON
WARD AND LOCK,
158, FLEET STREET.

MDCCCLX.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
317438B
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1945 L

WINCHESTER:
PRINTED BY HUGH BARCLAY,
HIGH STREET.

PREFACE.

THE following papers came into my possession shortly after the meeting of "ticket-of-leave" men convened by my friend, Mr. Henry Mayhew, and presided over by the Earl Carnarvon. I was present at this *soirée* of emancipated convicts, taking notes, and, doubtless, was followed to the *Morning Chronicle* office by some curious professional inquirer; since a few nights afterwards "a man in a white top-coat" left at the side door a bundle of these and other papers, in a parcel directed to myself, and marked "private." I regarded them at the moment mainly in the light of *pièces justicatifs;* as, just about that period, our own, as well as the offices of most of the other morning and weekly newspapers, had been entered, and their tills cleverly cleared out; but, on a subsequent perusal, during an interval of leisure, I came to the conclusion that it was my duty to make them public, as containing mention of many

singular circumstances, a knowledge of which may be useful to the community at large, and also certain reflections which appear to me to be deserving of consideration. If every story must have its moral, I think, in this instance, it may be found in the fact of the death of Mr. Horsleydown being mainly due to his indulgence in his habit of acquisition—to use no stronger term,—while under the very shadow of death. I have, of course, materially altered names and dates throughout the book, to avoid giving pain to individuals; but the manuscript, I can assure the public, was full of marginal notes and references, which testify to the truth and exactness of every incident herein related.

THOMAS LITTLETON HOLT.

300, STRAND,
September, 1860.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Bank Parlour	1
II.	The Bank Robbery	10
III.	How the Panic was Stopped	19
IV.	The Art of Honest Thieving	22
V.	What is Bred in the Bone	26
VI.	"Boots" at the Catherine Wheel	38
VII.	The Diamonds Robbery	42
VIII.	How to Make Money	45
IX.	How we Robbed the Queen	48
X.	A Post-bag Robbery	51
XI.	"My Lady Campbell at Home"	57
XII.	How we Robbed the Great Western Railway	63
XIII.	How we Robbed "the Jewellers"	67
XIV.	Lean Jem Tells his Story	72
XV.	Wonderful Jack	76
XVI.	What became of Wonderful Jack	81
XVII.	What became of Me	88
XVIII.	The Escape from Lancaster Jail	94
XIX.	How I Robbed Dr. Bowring	98
XX.	How we Robbed the Bank of England	103
XXI.	The Silver Robbery	106

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXII.	I Learn Manners, and Rob Lord Foley	109
XXIII.	I Become Respectable	111
XXIV.	How we Robbed Louis Napoleon Bonaparte	114
XXV.	The Sham Detective	119
XXVI.	The Great Hotel Robbery	129
XXVII.	How I got the Jewels	150
XXVIII.	The Detection	157
XXIX.	How I was Convicted of Felony and Saved my Honour	163
XXX.	Before Going	168
XXXI.	The Reverse of the Medal	176
XXXII.	How I Serve, and how I am Served	179
XXXIII.	How Sophy Jones Robbed the Draper	183
XXXIV.	The Gold Discovery	191
XXXV.	How I became Respectable once more	199
XXXVI.	The Gold Ship Piracy	203
XXXVII.	The Ballarat Bank Robbery	212
XXXVIII.	I Start for Home Triumphant	219
XXXIX.	The Good Fortune of Bad Luck	223
XL.	The Innocent Convict	243
XLI.	A Lawyer in a Trap	260
XLII.	The Queen of Holland's Diamonds	274
XLIII.	An Escape from Newgate	289
XLIV.	Sixteen Days of Death	295
XLV.	Can I be Wrong	307
	CHAPTER THE LAST.	
	Home at Last	310

CONFESSIONS OF A THIEF.

CHAPTER I.

THE BANK PARLOUR.

"Les banquiers sont faits pour changer de l'argent, et non pas pour en prêter .... Quand, au contraire, ils sont employés à faire des avances, leur art consiste à se procurer de gros profits de leur argent, sans qu'on puisse les accuser d'usure."—MONTESQUIEU, *De l'Esprit des Loix*, xxii. 16.

YES, I am a thief! I will not say that I glory in the title, for I had rather be called Archbishop of Canterbury, or a messenger of the Court of Bankruptcy; but as I am about to write my "Confessions," as other men, great in their way—and I am a very great man in mine—have done before me, I may as well start fair, and own myself at once what I am, what I always have been, what I was born, bred, and brought up —A THIEF!

There are various degrees and ranks of thieves, as I

have indicated above; but of all these a really simple mind can distinguish but two great classes—the legal and illegal thief. The first comprises every grade, from the fraudulent banker who sells the securities of the millionaire intrusted to his custody, down to the sheriff's officer who extorts the last sixpence, as "discharge fee," from the windy pocket of the unfortunate wight who has just prayed his way through the debtor's purgatory of a lock-up house; the second reckoning every shade of roguery, from sleek Money Moses in the grand epic drama of a Gold-dust Robbery to ragged Jack Tibbs, who picks an old lady's pocket at the corner of Drury Lane.

Now, I am of this latter class. I am a right-down thief—in fact, one who honestly pursues his vocation of thieving as a business—a calling, and not a necessity—a trade, elevated to the dignity of a profession by the grand scale in which it is carried on, and not a mere freak or amateur fancy. I was always a plain-spoken man—indeed, I could not well be otherwise, for I never learnt long words out of a spelling-book. I have read a great deal that has been written about thieves by young gentlemen that never had the courage to be one of them, but always shuffled into the legal class, steering as close to the wind as possible, and now and then clawing off a lee shore, and running for shelter and refitting into the merchant court. But I never learnt more from all their fine words and periphrases than that a thief was a kind of dignified miser, a lover of money for

its own sake, and willing, like a true soldier of romance, to run some risk in obtaining it.

I write this in a bank parlour, of which I was lately the manager, and am now the leading partner. Conduct and cash got me the first; but I should not have been the second if I had not been a thief.

You will hear afterwards how I became manager of this great bank. I will tell you at once how I became its leading partner. You must prepare to listen to some strange things in these "Confessions," and be ready to believe occurrences that you would have thought impossible. But could you only be yourself placed for a moment in the position of those whose stories I shall occasionally introduce, you would find the iron hand of circumstances so pressing upon you that you could not do otherwise than as they did. The lesson I have learnt through life is not to blame the man, but look at the circumstances; just as when you set a thief to catch a thief, or rather, I should say, when you employ Inspector Johnson to detect a robbery, he begins by first asking you who is the person you least suspect, and follows up his inquiry by a scrupulous looking after that very individual.

But to my story. I was head clerk of the great banking firm of, what shall I call it? Smith? No; there is a house so beginning. Jones? No; that name is also appropriated; so we will say, for clearness, Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co.

Oh! they were a good old firm were Chester, Man-

chester, Leeds, and Co., originally founded on one of the Quaker grocers' shops and bacon and cloth stores in a great northern town—dealers, brokers, agents, and remitters. They remained loyal and firm to the Hanoverian dynasty when the Pretender got into England as far as Derby, and did good service to the Whig cause at that critical moment. A junior partner came up to London, and had much to do with the foundation of the warehousing system. Gradually the new London house surpassed its country parent, and at last came to lead and support rather than require assistance. To be one of the partners in Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co., was indeed a high position. It was, and is, the creditable custom of old City firms to reward long-accredited service in a confidential situation with a small share in the business, and so the clerk at £800 per annum frequently became a partner. And so I was taken in as a partner to the house of Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co., the humble name of Horsleydown being swallowed up and absorbed in its mightier "Co."

But this share did not admit me either to the possession of the "green ledger" or the power of opening it, so that the real business operations of the bank were as profound a mystery to me as ever, with this exception—that my share of the profits did not equal the salary I had given up. Thus I found myself in every respect really "taken in as a partner."

The discovery was anything but pleasant, especially to a man like myself, whose only object in coming

there was to secure a profitable departure, and who had let so many good chances of securing a large sum go by, from a full conviction that patience must inevitably place something better in my power. The deficiency in amount of salary did not matter to me, as I could take out any sum I chose, and "make it right" in the books afterwards, so long as health and strength remained to carry me to the office daily; since, so long as I was present, and had the supplying of vouchers for my own accounts (every one else's being dressed and fined down to meet and assimilate with mine), it was impossible any detection could ensue, however astute or suspicious the auditor. What displeased me, however, in the transaction was the low estimate of my abilities by my employers, after an experience of years of Jack Horsleydown — that they should conceive they rather had bamboozled me, or could do so, although they were Directors of the Bank of England and the East India Company, Chairmen of Life Insurance Companies, Members of the Stock Exchange and also of the Jockey Club, as well as Members of Parliament.

However, I waited, and my time came at last. That time was A PANIC. We saw it coming. I was the first to point out to the people of our House that the building trades were pinching their men, and pitchforking small bills into the banks for discount. We looked out from our calm tower of capital, and saw a cloud in the atmosphere no bigger

than a man's hand, yet foretelling ruin to thousands. Our head man, a great financial authority, was one of those who stood upon a gold currency principle — excuse my talking such nonsense — and said that troublous times and periods of panics showed the power of the system and its truth. I never could make out how he arrived at this argument; but I know that he went up to the Bank of England some twenty days before the panic became evident, and secured from the directors accommodation of a very large amount indeed, at the mere ordinary rate of interest. What followed is matter of history. Six directors of the Bank of England itself stood shivering on the very verge of bankruptcy. The best houses were forced to pay twelve per cent. discount for short dates. Baring and Rothschild alone stood firm, and would not condescend to be helped by the Bank of England, which had done all the mischief, by restricting their own branch issue of notes to one hundred millions, as a conciliatory act to the country bankers, whose business Peel's Act, or rather that of our head partner, who was his right-hand adviser in finance, effectually destroyed. A short harvest, and a bad autumn's home trade, carried away all the gold to pay for bread-stuffs, and turned the balance of trade against us. The limit of Bank-of-England paper was restricted; all was issued that could be. Then came the crash in the country. But our head man was triumphant in the accommodation he had secured in advance.

We had all the money; now was the time to make the most of it. The great house of Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co., cared only to reap the harvest they had sown. The other large firms inveighed bitterly against us, and said we had made a catspaw of the Bank of England. What was that to us? We had got the money, and they had none.

One case of legal thievery on a grand scale at this period strongly impressed my mind, and set me thinking gravely as to my opportunities. There were some great railway works in hand at the moment, and one contractor had engagements of a very heavy amount to meet. He brought us in bills to the value of £200,000, all first-rate "paper" at short dates; that is, bills on good men, with two months or six weeks to run. Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co., had the money—all the money—for we had cleared out the Bank of England, who dared not issue more according to the act of parliament—and he came to us for discount. Not a pound would we let him have. We could not discount the bills in the present state of things; for "money, sir, money is now a commodity. It is like produce. So much sugar is wanted; so much less is in the market: the less represents in money value the greater, and sugar rises accordingly. So much money is wanted; there is so much less to be had than what is wanted in the market; and the so much the less represents in value, and is therefore worth, just equal to so much more."

Poor Sir Harry Martin seemed bewildered by this fine reasoning, and when our great man first refused to discount, took up his hat to go. Never shall I forget his face at that instant. It was not only his own wife and children that looked over his shoulder at the moment, but the wives and children of a Labour Army of many thousands, amongst whom a wageless Saturday night and a bankrupt employer would scatter wide-spread misery, dismal poverty, and its concomitant starvation. In that one glance of stern and sturdy despair I could read the story of a long-fought battle of life now lost. I could see bridges falling down; long lines of railway broken up, interrupted, fragmental, and ruined; furnaces blown out, and forges cold and silent; ships dismantled; mines flooded with returning waters, or noxious with unintermittent deadly gases; noble enterprises tottering; the canalisation of an isthmus, to save ten thousand miles in the world's periphery, and open new highways of commerce, for ever frustrated; factories with closed windows and barred doors; broken machinery; a starving population; discord, riots, blood; Gaunt Famine stalking ruthless over the land, and Civil War tearing at its very heart-strings.

But what mattered all these consequences to us, the partners? Our business was to realise the true value of money, and to make as much of it as we could; for there were no usury laws, and the robbery was a legal one.

called Sir Harry Martin back again at their request.

"We could not discount the bills, but we should not object to purchasing them."

"For how much?"

"One hundred and seventy thousand pounds in money for the £200,000 in bills."

"It is a robbery!" exclaimed Sir Harry, indignantly thrusting down his hat over his brow with a heavy thud. But there was an inexorable Saturday night before him; and when, after rummaging the whole city through, he could only get £100,000 discounted, he returned back to us on Friday afternoon, about two o'clock, with the other £100,000. He offered perforce, though respectfully, £15,000 for the discount of the other £100,000, being half the money for half the advance required.

"No, no," was the angry reply; "since yesterday, when you refused our price, money has risen in value."

So the contractor was compelled that afternoon to take £70,000 for his £100,000, thus paying £30,000 on Friday for what £15,000 had been asked on Thursday! And all this—which, as an honest, open thief, I call, in plain words, a robbery—was set down as a legitimate operation of commerce. Our house was loudly applauded for it by our brother bankers.

To this circumstance I owe my position; for this robbery opened my eyes to my own interests, and the right method of forwarding them.

CHAPTER II.

THE BANK ROBBERY.

"Proud swells the tide with loads of freighted ore,
And shouting Folly hails them from the shore;
Hoards e'en beyond the miser's wish abound,
And rich men flock from all the world around.
Yet count our gains, this wealth is but a name,
That leaves our useful products still the same."

GOLDSMITH.

On the subsequent Saturday morning the fever of the panic was fully raging, and scarcely a single member in any house throughout the whole city of London, except our own, but drew a long breath, as if his chest had been relieved of some heavy weight, when the chimes of the Royal Exchange clock began to number off the quarters before striking five in the afternoon. A heavy night was that of summing up and book-keeping, and fast travelling down to country branches. As for Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co., we told p our balance and adjusted our clearing as if nothing

unusual were passing. The head partner went off to the then new aristocratic quarter of Tyburnia or Belgravia, I hardly know which, and perhaps I had better not say; the second partner wrote off to the various other partners; and I myself strolled down to Hounsditch, to learn among the Jews what real news about gold could be learnt—a knowledge most important at that period. I had also to get an old key mended, and a new key made, and remembered that about that neighbourhood there was a cheapness anent dealings in keys, as well as a great variety of choice, and a remarkable ingenuity and skilfulness in making them. I was always particular about my keys; so this, among other reasons, was why I went up into Hounsditch Market on that Saturday afternoon.

There is no greater mistake than for people, when they desire to act secretly, and remain unknown, to adopt disguises. Change your place, the people you are among, the circumstances, and you are yourself a disguise. Become poor in place of rich; be at Hounsditch instead of Clapham; go to the flaring gin-shop in the New Cut, instead of the quiet suburban church in the evening, and lo! you are unknown—you are disguised—you are another man. Bushy whiskers, green spectacles, a false nose, these only make you the more remarkable. Why, there has an old fellow just passed, apparently blind, and led by a boy. Do you think I don't remember the Grand National Middlesex Savings' Deposit Bank in the Savoy? He is supposed to be dead:

but there he is in his green spectacles, and Inspector Wilkins knows him as well as I; but his friends and Wilkins's friends don't want him to be seen. Clearly you are not yourself—you are only the more remarkably so. The "gentleman in the cloak, with the high collar and the Welsh nightcap," is always handed out by the keen-eyed Mr. Stubbs, the "indefatigable detective," who waits, by appointment of the electric telegraph from London, the arrival of the absconding bankrupt at Southampton, and placidly prevails upon his confiding client, by means of a pair of handcuffs, to forfeit his prepaid passage to Panama, *en route* for St. Francisco—"by that mail, at any rate." Had the nervous Mr. Harris looked less like an officer of Hungarian cavalry (dressed à la Holywell Street, London), and remained content with his usual sleek, gentlemanly deportment and black trousers, he might have safely passed the inspection of the half-drunken Inspector Wilkins at the Loughborough Station, for he only knew that "somebody was wanted," and plainly saw Mr. Harris could not be what he seemed to want to look like. So, when I went to Hounsditch, I always went as I was, and acted naturally and with ease; thus neither provoking remark nor anticipating suspicion, and therefore I passed unheeded.

On Monday morning, by preconcerted arrangement, we met in the bank as early as half-past eight, to decide on the course of the day's business, mainly from e morning's post; though, indeed, our more important

despatches had reached us on the previous evening by express, and had formed the subject of animated discussion when we all dined together at the head partner's mansion—a rare condescension on his part; but somehow or other these terrible money crises knock a great deal of the starch out of men's collars. I well remember that, hoger-mogerish and grand as he usually was, he testified, unaffectedly, on that occasion, a great anxiety to learn my opinion, and in more than one instance deferred to my judgment and advice. They all knew I had particular connections with the most wealthy Jews, as well as means of information inaccessible to all the ordinary channels of the money trade. Gold was the great desideratum of the day, and it had been always noticed that I could lay my hand upon it at a price. Hence my visit westward that Sunday.

Well, next morning, Monday, they were all seated in the bank parlour at half-past eight o'clock, trying to eat a comfortable breakfast, and talking over the still contrary current of exchange, when it became necessary that I should go to the great iron closet in which our more valuable securities were deposited for safe custody, and open it, and take out the books for the necessary business of the day.

The key was handed to me, and I left the room. Judge their horror and my own when I was compelled to return instantly, and on my entrance communicate to them, in brief, emphatic terms, the dismal tidings

that the safe had been opened, and securities to the amount of halfa million (£500,000) abstracted!

At any time this would have been bad enough to hear; but at such a moment it involved the very existence of the house.

They seemed fairly stunned by the unexpected blow. One partner rose to rush out at once, but was stopped by another older and more discreet.

"Blame no one," he said, "much less make public our losses."

"Send for a detective officer," said our senior partner.

This was done, and the acute Sylvester came quickly —smiling, silent, and observant.

The man of experience lost no time. He ran over the list of clerks, and found no one absent at the first stroke of nine. The porter was out, but came in, and was traced from his usual primary matutinal draught of rum and milk. His wife was below, busied at her ordinary dusting avocations, singing as she worked. He next looked to the safe and the keys, then sat quiet and silent, as if ruminating, for half an hour, and finally requested an interview with the managing partner in a private room. The interview was but a brief one. He inquired who held the keys, and was informed that they were in the sole custody of the junior partner—myself. He next asked how long I had been a partner, how long a clerk; at what salary as clerk, and at what profits as partner. The answers to these questions apparently

decided him, and the oracle spoke. The remaining partners were summoned forthwith, I being at the time engaged at the counter, and to these gentlemen he communicated the astounding suspicion, or rather denunciation, that the guilty party was their own junior partner!

My partners were excessively surprised, staggered, annoyed, angry, and finally enraged at such a suspicion. They sent for me at once, expecting an indignant repudiation. They were disappointed.

Sylvester having been ordered into another room, the senior partner, with numerous apologies and an entire disdain of any such mad notion on his own part or the other gentlemen concerned with us, made known to me what had passed.

To their great surprise I exhibited no signs whatever of virtuous indignation, but treated the suggestion with the coolest indifference. They stared at each other like men bewildered.

"Gentlemen," said I, "Sylvester has in this instance exhibited his usual acuteness. I admire his sagacity."

"You don't mean to say that the officer is right?" cried one.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed another, "do you acknowledge yourself guilty of this atrocious theft?"

"Softly, gentlemen," I replied, keeping my temper perfectly, and preserving a firm attitude, with my back to the door. "I know of no theft in the matter. Be good enough to sit down, gentlemen, and let us look at the situation. I was your clerk at £800 per annum,

and I have become your partner at £600. Now what do you intend to do?"

"Prosecute you for the theft," said the senior partner vehemently. "Hang you if we can, but at any rate transport you! No compromise!" And he advanced to the bell to summon Sylvester, as he intimated.

"Hold, sir," I said; "that excellent officer can do nothing if you call him."

"How so?" asked the second partner, with a strange, puzzled look.

"Because I have only possessed myself of the securities belonging to the house, as you will see by this list," laying it upon the table. "In that house I am a partner, and that property is mine. I don't suppose Sylvester would arrest any man for taking what is his own, nor can any magistrate take cognizance of the case."

They all stared at each other in blank amazement, each one's eyes seeming as if entering into consultation with his neighbour's: the result was a general shaking of heads.

"Now, gentlemen," I went on, "something must be done, and that quickly."

"What, then, do you propose?" said the senior partner, in a tone of ineffable disgust.

"Time is short," I said (here all looked at their watches); "it is now a quarter to ten o'clock, and at ten o'clock we must open the house."

"Certainly," said the partners collectively.

"Or close it finally," said I.

"Indeed—yes, I am afraid so—— What's to be done?" came from them simultaneously.

"I have a great regard for the house, and a steady, sincere wish to preserve its firmness and solidity. You know what my conduct has been: you all know me, and I know you all, and all the affairs of the house. There is ample time, in ten minutes, for you to confer together. Double the amount of my share, let me into the management gradually, and all shall go on as usual. The securities are within call, and I will place at your disposal the power of dealing with a quarter of a million in gold at ten per cent. within one hour. Do this at once, and all is well; if not, WE—gentlemen, I say WE—shall be unable to meet our engagements; and with the house of Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co., the whole of South Lancashire goes into the *Gazette*, Cheshire is prostrated, and the West Riding paralysed."

Five minutes afterwards they were all shaking hands with me. Six months afterwards our senior partner retired, and I, a thief, became manager of the great banking-house of Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co., in whose parlour I am now writing these "Confessions."

You must not be surprised at this result. Once upon a time a roguish linen-draper—the grandest in Oxford Street—became bankrupt for £50,000, and two creditors violently opposed him for £10,000 each. He went through triumphantly, and everybody in court

admired his acuteness, dash, impudence,—in fact, his business qualifications. As they left the court together, one of these creditors said to the other,—

"Clever fellow, that Jack Simpson!"

"Very," replied the other. "Do you know I am going to offer him £600 a year to manage my business in Gracechurch Street?"

"You are just too late, Paterson," was the reply. "I booked him at £1000 a year when he came out of the box to conduct mine in St. Paul's Churchyard!"

CHAPTER III.

HOW THE PANIC WAS STOPPED.

"Later in life they learn that the greater number of men have much more good in them than bad, and that even where there is cause to blame, there is more reason to pity than condemn; and then a spirit of confidence again wakes within them."

MISS BREMER.

BUT this was not all; Sylvester retired with a twenty-pound note in his pocket, and held his tongue on the events of that morning. He was by no means surprised; —such men seldom are. It was no business of his whether a felony had been committed or not, or compounded or not; all he had to do was to point out the party who had opened an iron safe, and he did so. He always touched his hat afterwards to me with the greatest respect, and, I have no hesitation in saying, entertained strong doubts in his own mind as to who had been the real thief on the occasion, myself or the retiring partner. Arrangements of this nature are not uncommon in the City. Formerly, when they hanged men out of the way, the bankers used to prosecut-

Now that men are allowed to live, and may talk and be heard, they "hush it up," as the old Duke once said to a royal personage, when she (herself unmarried) thought a virgin maid of honour was about to have a large family.

But events ran quickly in those days of commercial terror. Our letters brought particulars of a tremendous crisis in the colliery district. From Newcastle alone there was a call on the Branch Bank of England in that district for £300,000. The call was referred to London. The directors of the Bank of England refused the accommodation. They had resolved to play out the game of the Bank Restriction Act.

Wolverhampton always rotten, and South Staffordshire never safe at the best of times, swelled the cry. Still, "a refusal."

Up rose the mining district. The "black country" was a scene of chaos and confusion. Employers and employed for once sympathised. In gangs, not of hundreds, but thousands, the unpaid miners, with no wages to purchase bread, and no work to cause wages, paraded the villages and towns, clearing out the shops. Students of commerce and currency—philosophers—saw in this nothing more than the working out of their gold problem to complete demonstration. They looked on complacently, and reasoned calmly. Not so those on the spot. The desperation of men of such a class was something awful to contemplate. The most respectable men of the North combined in a deputa-

tion to ask for an Order in Council allowing the issue of Bank-of-England notes, since no more gold could be got at. But the silly men that govern this country — men who, fresh from their tutors, and still smarting with the pedagogical birch, undertake to manage the finance, and control the trade, of twenty-seven millions of people—replied that the principle of the Act must be preserved at any risk; that such risk, when it occurred, would cure itself; in short, that universal ruin would result in commercial security! Ruin first, and revolution next, were impending; when the determined spirit of one man, then managing the Newcastle Branch of the Bank of England, stemmed the tide and saved the country. By virtue of his authority, he drew away all the gold from the Northern Branches of the Bank of England, swept the whole district clear of gold, and concentrated it in Newcastle. The £300,000 in gold once there, he wrote by express to his employers in London, advising them that, unless money were instantly sent to every one of the Branches, the Bank must itself stop. That night the desired Order in Council was promulgated: two millions of Bank-of-England notes were issued; the deficit in the currency was supplied; trade resumed its wonted channels; the Panic was over, and our bank lost sixty per cent. of its income by the next morning.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ART OF HONEST THIEVING.

"Convey—the wise it call."

SHAKSPEARE.

JUST previously to becoming a partner in the house I had been engaged in several great railway speculations. Not that they were actually speculations, though apparently so. With me they were certainties for gain. There was, however, a new element in these railway matters that had not hitherto come directly under my cognizance. This was the railway engineer. As to the lawyers and the landlords, we were on our guard as regarded them. The first was to be allowed his share, but watched lest he should take too much. The landlord went to work wholesale; but as there was no getting an Act of Parliament through without him, most of our M.P.'s being of the landlord class, we were, perforce, compelled to submit to his plunder, and rest contented with the pickings after him. But as for the railway engineer, that was the most incredible thief of all! He only drew a line over an ordnance map (which he bought for five shillings), made up his

book from the Parish Surveys, and set a few idle, lounging fellows to drag a jack-chain over the fields at two guineas a day each, and there was his work done; and he wanted £18,000 for it. Even the lawyers cried out, and as for the shareholders! But I hit upon a plan to satisfy all parties, myself included. This was to return their money.

Yes, to return their money,—minus 2s. 6d. per share for expenses, and give up the project.

O how glad they were to get it back again! Those who had purchased for premiums shouted a little. But to get their money back!—how the others huzzaed for the indignant committee, of ourselves, who brought about a result so desirable and so unexpected!

A little "mental arithmetic," coupled with some of the "subtraction" I had learnt, and "Dr. Whateley's Easy Lessons on Money," enabled me to carry out this operation with a felicitous result. One hundred and eighty thousand pounds had been paid on one company, and we returned £1 17s. 6d. per share on "90,000 shares, deposit £2 each."

This left 90,000 half-crowns for self, and lawyer, and engineer, or £11,250, which, as in this Company we had done no more than issue prospectuses, and spend £1000 in advertisements, was not a bad finish, especially as we were thereby discharged from all further responsibility, and the possibility of a Chancery suit. I saw the other Companies go by the board, and the other shareholders "wound up" in that never-tiring

roasting-jack, the Court of Chancery; and I hugged my own prudence, and thanked that "mental arithmetic," the manner of my obtaining which you shall shortly learn.

As soon as we had done this with our own companies we found out a plan for doing it with others. This was to buy up their shares at an exceeding discount—for there was a panic everywhere—and then setting on a noisy accountant, whom we hired, to bellow and advertise for dissentient shareholders of all sorts, and call for accounts. We got at last a meeting of angry shareholders, and passed resolutions that the shares should be cancelled and the whole money returned, appointing ourselves managers for that purpose.

Then we "got out" of railways, and "banged" the shares up and down, "bearing" and "bulling," accordingly as we wished to buy or sell.

The end of all was, that we came out of the Panic clear of risk, with a wholesome lesson and handsome profits.

That was the time to see roguery rampant in the City. At first all went mad, and bought; then all got frightened, and sold; but we pulled the strings all the while, and made the money. I remember our senior partner asking me the secret of my success. I replied that I could safely tell him; for either way, whether he acted with or against me, he must aid my playing of the game.

"I buy with the rising, and sell in a falling market," was my reply.

"Now I," said Mr. Manchester, "act quite differently; I sell in a rising, and buy in a falling market. We are both successful, and so both systems must be right."

This reminded me of the story of the two Italian couriers, each with his *milord Anglais* in the carriage behind, who met in a narrow pass in the Apennines, each refusing to go back.

"What does he say?" asked one of the travellers, observing the violent pantomimic anger displayed by his courier. "What does the fellow say?"

"Oh, milord, he says if I don't go back he will beat my Englishman."

"And what, pray, did you reply?"

"That if he did I would beat his Englishman."

The two travellers thereupon got out and walked away; but the British public, who in these matters get beaten by both sides, can't always get away, as they found to their cost in that railway panic. The final close up and settling day is not yet accomplished, though the judges have been hammering at it ever since, with the whole army of the vice-chancellors; and even the very masters of Chancery have died out, and their offices with them, in the interim.

But I will go on with my story. By this time you may, perhaps, feel curious to know some little of the early history and adventures of Jack Horsleydown, Gentleman, Railway Director, Banker, and Thief.

CHAPTER V.

WHAT IS BRED IN THE BONE.

"What is done we may partly guess; but who can tell what is resisted?"—*Appeal of the* REV. MR. MITCHELL, *Chaplain to Knutsford Jail.*

I HOLD my title as a thief by as good a one, indeed, better than that of the Duke of Northumberland to being a Percy, for they tell me he is only a Smithson; and I met a tailor's grandson in Australia, a convict thief, who was said to be the real Percy. Be that as it may, my father was a highwayman, the last of his class. I never saw him; but in my latter days I picked up some fragments of his history. He died like a man of spirit, not on the gallows-tree, but in his vocation. The last feat he succeeded in accomplishing was the robbery of a lady of quality on Hounslow Heath. She had been on a wedding excursion with a friend, to whom she had acted as bridesmaid, and they were returning home from Ealing, over Hounslow Heath, in the dusk of the evening, four of them, in a carriage with four horses. Just as they neared a mound, on which had been erected

three gibbets to the memory of former heroes, they saw a man on horseback, whom they suspected to be a highwayman, and began hiding their money and jewels. Before they could do this effectually the highwayman had knocked the leading postboy off his horse, and presented himself, pistol in hand, at the carriage window. Forty pounds, four watches, two diamond necklaces, several rings, and three purses were his booty. More he might have had, but that the noise of several carriages approaching made him decamp. My father carried on this business between Wimbledon Common and Hounslow Heath, and was so daring and so successful, that at last the Bow Street chief magistrate, then a Mr. Addington, determined to have him taken, dead or alive. The police officers got upon his track, and hunted him for weeks; but he was too quick for them. At last he was caught in his own snare—seethed in his mother's milk! Two Bow Street runners, armed to the teeth, men of great nerve and undaunted pluck, drove in a chaise and four, at three o'clock on a fine summer's morning, from London, through Wimbledon, to Hounslow Heath—the scene of his most frequent and flagrant exploits. At four they were met by him while rattling over Wimbledon Common. The luggage behind, the style of the equipage, and the route, deceived my unsuspecting parent. He thought the carriage was conveying some traveller of wealth and importance, with a well-lined purse, and shouted to the postilions to stop. This order they obeyed, as pre-

viously instructed, and the robber rode up to the carriage window, presenting his pistol, to request supplies. Here he came face to face with the muzzle of another pistol, and the next instant fell dead from his horse. Sir Martin Arthur Shee, President of the Royal Academy, told me this story (little did he know how interested I was in it) as he was painting my portrait. He had happened to be present, for the same purpose, at Mr. Addington's, the chief magistrate's house, when the constable came in, highly delighted, to report his success.

"Shot him dead, sir, at four o'clock this morning."

So fell the last of the highwaymen—the father of Jack Horsleydown.

Yes, crime, if you choose so to call it, is hereditary. If you catch all the thieves at once, teach and feed the young ones, and find them work, and lock up the old ones to hinder them teaching others, you would stop crime—check it, if not eradicate it. But you encourage illegitimacy by checking marriage, and make the natural union illegal and discreditable by all means in your power, thus rearing a population without parental care, or contact or responsibility—a fertile bed for vice. As for your old thieves, after passing them through training schools in convict prisons, instead of sending them far away from the country, you give them bad characters, or certificates of dishonesty and hypocrisy in the shape of tickets of leave, and turn them loose to "teach the young idea how to"—thieve.

Born a bastard (for my mother was a laundress's daughter, who had been led astray by the flashy looks and free words of my high-spirited father), I was bred a thief. She died when I was a suckling, having left me bruised and broken-faced on the floor of a public-house—lost and forgotten even by my mother! She was maddened with my father's absence. She never knew of his death, and comforted herself with drink, and revenged herself with profligacy, as mad women sometimes do. Her career was short. When she left me in the gin-shop at Horsleydown she staggered forth, and, while raving at some equally drunken sailor who had struck and robbed her, fell over the wharf side into the river. The tide ran strong that morning; a rolling mass of dirty clothes was alone discernible for an instant, then a lean, long hand held up from the swift-rushing waters. The body was picked up near Dagenham, and, as I afterwards learnt, the coroners of Kent and Essex had a lawsuit who should hold the inquest; the body, meantime, floating, tied to a boat, off the Pier at Erith, abiding the settlement of the question.

Until eight years of age I lived in the workhouse, where I learned to read and write; and, but that I was always hungry, and very often sick and ill with overmuch gruel, the life I led was one of passive happiness.

It was here I met with many deserted children, as they were called, and most of them I watched in after life. You may take them as one-third of the criminal

population. They are the stuff we thieves work with and upon. They have no home to tie them, no relatives to care for them. They have never seen a fireside they can call their own, nor known a mother's gentle hand, nor feared a father's frown. In sickness and in sorrow who is to aid and comfort *them?* Who cares for *their* souls, much less their bodies? They herd in the lowest dens, the filthiest lodging-houses—dwellings of profligacy and vice. If they work, all they can earn is swallowed up in the poorest food, the meanest lodging. Work done, as evening closes, where are they to go? Home there is none for them. Hell, only hell, is open! for the way to heaven they know not—and who of our wealthy clergy cares to tell them?—for they belong to no parish. Drink, if they can pay for it; ribaldry, if they can afford to laugh; roguery, if they wish to enjoy themselves, are all ready. If you that are good and virtuous, and rich and happy, and guarded by loving eyes and hands, sobered by forethought, and well fed and well taught, pray, earnestly, to be spared from temptation, what must temptation be to these poor wretches,—behind, and beside, and before whom the Tempter stands, with unintermittent persuasion, urging their downward course?

I was apprenticed at eight years old to a surgeon in Newcastle, and used by him rather as a slave than one to be taught. My first prison experience was at the age of eight years and three months, when I was committed to jail, with another little boy, for pulling some beets at the top of a field. With me were three others,

one of eleven, for beating another boy, and taking from him his gingerbread cake; another for stealing a pair of rabbits; and another, twelve years of age, for "playing at a game called 'marbles,' to the annoyance of the public,"—so ran the warrant! "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," even though a prison be your training school! Perhaps you don't believe this? Ask Adam Black, the Lord Provost of Edinburgh—he saw me there; and William Allan, of the same place, can show you the warrant of the other boys' committal.

Not that boys are always innocent, and that there are not young thieves. I knew one in prison for house-breaking and theft at twelve years old, and another, of fourteen years, in for theft, who had been there eleven times before. They both lived in a thieves' lodging-house, and paid two shillings and sixpence per week, which they got by stealing, as their landlady well knew. I never but once saw a whole family of thieves together, and that was in Hull. They were Manchester bred, and sentenced to transportation for picking pockets. They afterwards made me capital servants. The gang consisted of Jerry O'Neill, a young fellow of twenty-one years; his wife, Ellen, only seventeen; her brother, Roger Connor, nineteen; and young Feargus O'Grady, nineteen. O'Neill and Connor had been twenty-six times in jail for short periods, and O'Grady had been in almost every county prison in England. Ellen O'Neill had been four or five times in the "jug," and

two other brothers had led similar lives, and been similarly imprisoned. Their father and brother came in to see them—a decent, well-dressed man, about fifty-five, and a sharp, dark-eyed lad of fourteen, both practised thieves. They howled about the transportation, but neither sex had the slightest notion of having done anything wrong. So much for your prison system. Oh! there is a rare nice lot breeding up in and about Manchester—Irish parents, fresh from the gay morals of the Emerald Isle, and Lancashire-born children! It was calculated at the time by the prison officers that this one family had cost the country, in plunder, prosecutions, and imprisonments, upwards of £26,000. So—as I have always thought—it would be quite as cheap for parliament to pension off the thieves, as it does the lawyers and bankrupt-messengers of the country, in the way of compensation, which only means, when properly translated, "Take so much, and steal no more."

I learned some doctoring at Mr. Griffith's, and the method of compounding medicines, the knowledge of which I found extremely useful in after life; but I quarrelled with him about keeping company with a girl, afterwards the famous Alice Grey. She was a Catholic, and, as I was brought up a Protestant—Heaven only knows why, except that the guardians of our parish were Protestants—my master forbade the banns of our courtship. He tried to show me the difference between the two religions, and gave me my

choice as to courting Alice Grey or leaving his house. I chose the former, and left him, not without first opening his desk and taking out eight pounds. It was hardly my fault, for though the desk was locked, he had left the key in it. If he trusted me, why did he lock the desk? and if he did not trust me, why did he leave the key in it? I beat about awhile, and found my way to a weaver's at Preston; but money running short here, I took thirty shillings out of the waistcoat pocket of my landlord while he was working side by side with me, and decamped. He followed, and gave me a rough handling, besides making me give back the money. He took me home again with him, but the other men looked down upon me, and I did not like the disgrace, so I worked my way towards Leeds.

Here I happened to go into a chemist's shop to buy some cough lozenges just as somebody came in and asked for some medicine. There was no one in the shop but a boy, and I noticed this boy taking down a bottle with the wrong medicine marked on it. I told him it was not right, as I well knew that the stranger would have been poisoned if he took it. While we were discussing this matter the apothecary came into the shop himself. He had overheard our conversation, and asked how I came to understand such matters. I told him how I had been brought up, and it ended in my entering his service, where I remained four years, until his niece took a fancy to me, and he thought it advisable to give me ten pounds to go away.

Here it was that I took to drinking, and so fell into the company of persons of bad character. Drunkenness is a horrible vice. I was cured of it by going to prison. The taste for drink goes off in from ten to twenty days. The desire for snuff remains longest; but the want of tobacco is, I think, the only real suffering occasioned to the prisoner by our present system of imprisonment. That, and the going to chapel so early, the going to bed so early, and the being always preached at by the chaplain, bullied by the turnkeys, and stowed up like pigs for inspection by the governor, are the great inconveniences to which persons of my profession are liable.

From the doctor's I went over to Ireland, and learning there was a decent prison there, I engaged myself with a baker at Philipstown; but his hours did not suit me, and I left him, as did also thirty golden guineas at the same time. But I was unlucky. The baker caught me, and I had sixty days' imprisonment (half a guinea a day) for it.

It was here I first began to think of improving my mind, having so much leisure time.

I found the programme of their school to be excellent. It was as follows—in addition to "Preparatory Outlines of History, Astronomy, Natural History, from the Fifth Lesson Book in the section on History; Dr. Sullivan's Introduction to Geography, and History of the Sovereigns of England since the Norman Conquest; the Geography Generalised,

under the head, Outlines of Astronomy; Patterson's Zoology of the Classification of Animals;" together with "Tables constructed of the heights of mountains, lengths of rivers, populations of towns and countries, height of the snow line in different latitudes, printed on canvas or black boards" (I am quoting the Government "Reports," as I like to be exact in such matters, creditable as they are to the country's care of its thieves, which is so much greater than what it takes of its soldiers or their children):—

PROGRAMME.

FIRST D.—Reading: First Book, Section I. Writing: Straight Lines, Parallel Lines, Angles, Triangles, &c., on Slates. Arithmetic: Numeration Table, Names of Digits, Numeration of Two Places, Mental Addition of ones, twos, fives, and tens; Mental Subtraction by Unity.

FIRST C.—Reading: First Book, Section II., pages and pauses. Writing: Letters, Digits, Circles, Curves, &c., on Slates. Arithmetic: Mental Addition of any of the Digits; Mental Subtraction by units, tens, and fives; Notation of Two Places, and Numeration of Three; Multiplication Table of two, five, and ten times.

FIRST B.—Reading: First Book to page 24; Spelling and Meaning of Words. Writing: Words of two or three Letters on Slates. Arithmetic: Multiplication and Pence Tables; Notation of Three Places, and Numeration of Four; Addition on Black Board. Geography: Cardinal Points; Nature of a Map; Shape and Motions of the Earth; Outlines of Map of the World.

FIRST A.—Reading: First Book to the end; Spelling and Explanation. Writing: Large Hand on Slates. Arithmetic: Multiplication on Black Board; Notation of Four Places, and Numeration of Six; Tables of Weights and Measures. Ge-

graphy: Local Geography on Map of the World. English Grammar: Noun and Verb.

SECOND C.—Reading: Second Book; Spelling and Explanation. Writing: Large Hand on Paper. Arithmetic: Simple Rules; Notation of Six Places. Geography: Local Geography of Europe. English Grammar: Five principal Parts of Speech; Gender and Number of Nouns; Comparison of Adjectives.

SECOND B.—Reading: Sequel I. to Second Book; Spelling and Explanation. Writing: Round Hand on Paper. Arithmetic: Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and Division of Money. Geography: Local Geography of Ireland. English Grammar: Declension of Pronouns; Conjugation of Verbs.

SECOND A.—Reading: Sequel II. to Second Book; Spelling and Explanation. Writing: Small Hand on Paper. Arithmetic: Compound Rules and Reduction. Geography: Local Geography of England and Scotland. English Grammar: Conjugation of Verbs by Persons, Tenses, and Moods; Declension of Nouns; Parts of Speech in Lessons.

THIRD, FOURTH, AND MONITORS.—Reading: Third Book; Spelling and Explanation. Writing from Dictation. Arithmetic: Proportion, Practice, Fractions, Vulgar and Decimal. Geography: Local Geography of Continents; Mathematical Geography, Latitude, Longitude, Zones, Climates, Tides, Temperatures, Seasons, &c.; Animal and Vegetable Productions of different Countries. English Grammar: Parsing, Synthetical and Analytical. History: Outlines of Ancient and Modern; Distinguishing Eras and Principal Events. Astronomy: Outlines; Primary Planets, their dimensions, periodic times, and revolutions; Phases of the Moon; Attraction. Political Economy: "Dr. Whateley's Easy Lessons on Money Matters." Natural History: General Classification of Animals.

N.B.—Each class to learn the subjects marked for all the preceding classes.

I went through all this excellent system in the sixty ays, though I must confess that the "parsing, syn-

thetical and analytical," rather tried me. At the end of the sixty days, or even at the commencement of them, I flatter myself I could have given "Dr. Whateley" himself some "Easy Lessons on Money Matters."

All this was of the utmost advantage to me in future rogueries. I never knew any position or circumstances in which I did not find myself the better for this teaching; and I shall ever look back with gratitude to my sojourn in Philipstown.

Who can wonder, after this, at the many Irish gentlemen of education that are met with on the Press, at the Bar, and in Parliament, when any thief can receive so liberal an education in his early years gratuitously, together with "one pound eight ounces of bread and a pint of soup daily, three ounces and a half of meat in every pint of soup?" One shilling and sixpence a day, or nine shillings and sixpence a week, is all the independent thief costs his country, or his county, weekly for food and lodging. His education is charged on the "Consolidated Fund," whatever that may be; the only defect in the system being, as I have had occasion to observe before, that the thief is not provided with a pension in after life unless he go to the Bar—as a lawyer I mean—or enter Parliament, and become a Minister of State, or a Messenger of Bankrupts, the salaries and retiring pensions for which are, I have reason to believe, about equal.

CHAPTER VI.

"BOOTS" AT THE CATHERINE WHEEL.

"Like other worms shall we crawl on, nor know
Our present frailties, nor impending fate."

YOUNG.

AN English thief is not particularly respected by the Irish, whether officially connected with the business or otherwise; so, assisted by the bounty of the governor, and aided by the kind interference and subvention of the authorities, I soon found myself at Holyhead, whence I worked my way, robbing the hen-roosts as I went along, to North Shields (I was hankering after Alice Grey, who had got down that way); and finding there a vessel where an apprentice was wanted, I offered myself for the berth. For a young fellow that hated hard work, and loved reflection, and an easy way of getting his living by "mental arithmetic" and "subtraction," this was indeed "a sickener." I did not like the sea, and, on the return of the vessel, gave up my situation. I then went to Sunderland, and got a place in another vessel; but that was only to insure myself a passage to London. Here I remained a few weeks,

during the last of which I procured a situation at the Catherine Wheel Inn, in the Borough, as "Boots."

To this inn came one evening a certain Mr. George Whipper, of Kingston-upon-Thames, who, having dined with a friend, one Mr. Robert South, at Drummond's, in the New Road, Marylebone, and afterwards visited the Princess's Theatre and supped in the Haymarket, came to sleep at the Catherine Wheel. Tolerably tipsy was Mr. Whipper, and not very sober Mr. South. They had called at several places on their way to London Bridge, and did not arrive with us until a quarter to five in the morning. Of course, as night porter, I waited on them, and put them into bedrooms that looked into the gallery. It is an old house, such as the Talbot used to be. The gallery runs round the inn yard, and the bedrooms open into it. I brought them candles, and pulled off first Mr. South's boots, and then one of Mr. Whipper's. But after I had pulled off one of them I was compelled to go downstairs, being taken suddenly ill. On my return I pulled off the other, and then Squire Whipper seemed to grow sober all of a sudden, and snatched his boot, and put his hand down it, and cried out that he was robbed, and that his pocket-book had been in his left boot, and that it was stolen.

Terrified at such a charge, I ran downstairs instantly from the gallery, and brought up the boot; but there was no pocket-book there. Whipper would not be satisfied, but called for the police, and swore he always kept his pocket-book in his left boot when he went out

"on the loose," and that he had felt it there when he came into the yard, and before he got out of the cab, and that I must have seen it, and that he would have it back. I was very much distressed at this, and threw open my coat and waistcoat, and pulled my pockets inside out, and called up my master, who, like myself, utterly disbelieved the fact of any robbery having taken place. However, Squire Whipper persisted in giving me into custody, and having the place searched; but nothing of the lost pocket-book could be found, and the gates of the yard and the house being locked, it seemed probable that the squire must be mistaken, and had either mislaid his pocket-book, or it had slipped or worked itself out of his boot. I stood on my character; my master bailed me; and we both threatened an action for defamation. What was most curious was that the pocket-book, which had contained one hundred-pound Bank-of-England note and four fifty-pound notes, was found next afternoon at the Phœnix Gas Works' gate, just fifty feet from the Catherine Wheel Inn. We had all passed that way, both Whipper and South in the cab, to come home, and myself and the policeman on the way to the police station. I forgot to say that the pocket-book was empty when found; and I need not tell you that, as soon as I got out of the police office, I gave up all notion of going to law, and returned quietly back to Sunderland, where I engaged as a seaman on board a collier that was going to Cowes, in the Isle of Wight. At that place I enlisted into Her

Majesty's service, and went on board the *Pique* frigate. We sailed to Barbadoes, and there I was drafted to the *Flamer*, a steam brigantine. I did not like the service, and soon deserted. I was, however, retaken; but on our passage from Barbadoes to Demerara I deserted again at St. Vincent's. There I remained about eighteen months, in the employment of a Mr. Lascelles, a grocer; and at the end of that time I returned to England in a brig bound for London, in which I acted as steward. I never heard any more of Squire Whipper and his friend South. I wonder whether they ever found the two hundred pounds? I was always satisfied with the reflection of my own conduct in that transaction; nothing is so foolish as revenge, or so unwise as going to ruin under any circumstances.

CHAPTER VII.

THE DIAMONDS ROBBERY.

"Do not give dalliance,
Too much the rein; the strongest oaths are straw
To the fire i' the blood."

Tempest.

I STOOD in for a good thing with the captain of our ship on this occasion. He had sailed originally from a port in Scotland with coals, and thence proceeded, with no particular instructions from his owners, to various ports "on his own hook," taking different freights, contrary to his owners' orders. At length he reached Bahia, where he received from Messrs. De Gand and Pilfren, merchants at that place, two packages of diamonds consigned to Messrs. Schrafter and Co., in London, for which property bills of lading in due form were executed. No one knew, in the beginning of the voyage, that there was any such precious freight on board—a necessary precaution, for the knowledge of such a fact is likely to produce a serious fever on board. A man's blood gets warm, and is apt to burn through

his skin, and set his fingers tingling and itching, when he knows that there is a fortune on board, that, once divided amongst those present, would make them all happy for life. So the captain said nothing about it until we neared Deal, and then, the pilot coming on board, he called me to him, told me about the diamonds, and asked me to accompany him up to London. This was just the job I liked, especially as I could see there was a hankering after something in the captain's mind which he wanted to talk about, but scarcely dared to mention. However, sailor-like, we set to drinking as soon as we arrived in London; and putting up at the first house in East Smithfield, commenced a carouse that ended in all being intoxicated and asleep before the afternoon was over. A couple of hours' rest soon brought me round, and finding the landlord a jolly fellow, I passed a sign to him, known only to clipper thieves, and he responded. The game was soon made. I told him about the diamonds, and it was agreed to make a move for them at any rate. About eight P.M. I roused the captain, and we went off to the theatre, thence to supper at a tavern, thence home to our quarters in East Smithfield, and more grog. Here we found a jovial little party—the landlord, and a Jew tailor, a merry, blithesome rogue, and another, a jewel dealer, one Gideon Drasett, also very good company. We made a night of it, and agreed to breakfast together next morning, when, the captain being still stupidly drunk, as we had resolved to keep him, an allusion

was made to diamonds, and he boasted he had some to show. The two parcels were soon had out, and Lipey Benjamin, the tailor, happening to undervalue them, the captain swore he should go and sell them, and bring back the money, and see whether they were not as precious as he had said they were. Upon this there was more drinking, and Lipey went out with the diamonds and came in again several times, alleging great difficulty in selling them. At last he came in to say he had got £1500 for them, which he had; and the captain said he was a noble fellow, and gave him £100 for his trouble; and we put the other notes in the captain's pocket, and brightened him up with some champagne. This drove him wild, and he broke open the other package of diamonds, and divided them amongst us. This done, we thought the sooner he was out of the way the better; so we put him on board a French fishing lugger, and started him down the river.

His owners were soon alarmed: they went down to the ship, but the bird had flown. Young Sylvester was despatched after him, and found him at Montreuil with all the money, which he handed over. There was an Old Bailey business about it; and the landlord, and the tailor, and the diamond broker—who had bought £2500 worth for £1500—were all hauled over the coals at the trial. So was not I. They all disgorged. So did not I. I sold my diamonds singly in Hounsditch, and then "levanted" into a totally distinct line of life.

CHAPTER VIII.

HOW TO MAKE MONEY.

"I could wish that everything I touched
Might turn to gold. This is the sinews of war
And the sweetness of peace."

LILLY.

IN the first house I went to lodge in, there was a young woman who wished to make my acquaintance, and commenced it by stealing my watch. I hallooed pretty loudly, as you may suppose; and the man of the house happening to be at home, came in to see what the noise was about, and recognised me as an old acquaintance at Leeds. He soon made "Curly Jemima," as she was called, return the watch, and took me under his own special protection. We quickly drank out together the ten pounds I had set aside for that purpose (my seaman's wages), and then finished the watch. He then proposed to me to make some money, as we had not got any, and speedily instructed me in the art of coining. First he taught me how to make shillings by a mould of plaster of Paris; but to get

at a good mould was a difficult job, and it was not until three months' hard practice that I succeeded perfectly. I could then make about one hundred shillings a night. We did not pass them ourselves, but were wholesale manufacturers, selling most of them to people who took them into the country, and a great many to persons keeping low public-houses and beer-shops. Our price was five shillings for a pound's worth, common Britannia metal; but for six shillings a pound we used to give them German silver. We had another "pal," one "Wonderful Jack," as handsome a fellow as ever you set eyes upon, and no end of a spirit. He and Jem worked at the half-crowns, while I rolled out the shillings, and rubbed them up. Sometimes we used British plate, or *albata*, I think they call it; and then, as it could scarcely be distinguished from silver itself, we charged ten shillings for a pound's worth. If counterfeits are made with German silver, mixed with British plate, they cannot be detected either by the ring or the weight, but they may by the feel, or by scraping them; but if they are electro-plated, which is done with a single dip for less than a quarter of a minute, I defy you to tell the difference, unless you cut into the coin, and hardly then. Unless plated in this manner, counterfeit coins have a smooth surface always, and the more they are rubbed the smoother the surface becomes. Those coins that are not well made have also generally what is called a hill and a hollow; that is, one side projects a little, and the other goes inwards. In passing this

money the usual way is for two persons to go together; one enters the shop, while the other remains near, to observe what goes on. The person who enters the shop does his best, after he has made his purchase, and is about to pay for it, to take away the attention of the shopkeeper from the coin by talking about the weather. But if the shopkeeper suspects the forgery, and gives a signal to any one to fetch an officer, then the associate comes in, buys something with a good piece of money, and makes a signal to the first man to leave. It was this coining that first made me understand, practically, the theory of "Representative Value," which had hitherto been a sore puzzle to my half-educated faculties, as a portion of the Currency Question. The bad shilling, as I was now enabled to see, represented the real shilling, which it was not, and answered the same purpose, so long as it circulated without question. It was thus, effectually, to all purposes of Exchange, a metallic currency, and sufficed to the requisition of both theories—whether of Paper or Gold.

We carried on this business through the winter, always burying our tools when not at work, which we generally were five nights out of the seven. It was very hard, and not pleasant work, so we resolved to change our style of living; for this present method came a great deal too close to an honest living to be worth pursuing, especially as it had all the risks of thieving without the profit.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW WE ROBBED THE QUEEN.

"They were, in truth, great rascals, and belonged to that class of people who find things before they are lost."

GRIMM.

WE happened to be walking across St. James's Park, and up Constitution Hill, just at the time of arriving at this excellent determination. It was a fine evening, but early in the season, and Her Majesty was about to go down to Windsor. This became evident from the appearance of a royal *fourgon*, or waggon carriage, drawn by four spanking horses, and with two servants in front.

"There's a good swag there," says Lean Jem.

"I should like to have it," added Wonderful Jack.

"There is nothing like trying," said I.

So we called a cab, and followed the royal equipage.

It is said that among the workmen employed by the Board of Works there is a standing rule that every man seen to sweat, when at work, shall be fined a gallon

of beer. All the parties about this royal carriage, servants and postilions, even the horses, evidently belonged to this particular union. They took it very leisurely, and because they had four horses to convey them from Pimlico to Paddington, and were afraid they might be too soon, they halted at the Waggon and Horses, on the Green, for refreshment after the fatigues of the journey, and to recruit themselves previous to crossing the bridge. In doing this they all went into the house, and left the carriage unguarded behind. Wonderful Jack slipped up the bar in a twinkling; Lean Jem opened the door, lifted out a plate-chest; and I signalled a righteous cab (one in the secret of our business is always crawling about), and away we went, shutting the door of the carriage after us.

The carriage trotted round to the rail, and then, where, oh, where was the plate-chest? Police!—police! The Queen has been robbed!

We got out in Bonner's Fields, far, far away, and sat down to divide the spoil in Wonderful Jack's lodgings (I don't know how it is, but he always had a nice wife and a comfortable home about him, this Wonderful Jack), and I soon gouged the lock out. Then, behold! two or three old stockings, some dirty clothes, a couple of napkins (not clean), a table-cloth, some house towels, a silver pap-boat with Prince Arthur's initials, a couple of pounds of moist sugar, and a flannel petticoat!

Those were the contents of the royal plate-chest.

that was carried in the waggonette with the royal arms, and drawn by four horses with two postilions, and attended by two royal servants.

We looked at each other, and laughed outright; and then, as it was necessary to get rid of the plate-chest, we tumbled it into Bonner's Fields, where it was found next morning with all its valuable contents untouched, save the silver pap-boat, which Wonderful Jack presented to his wife, with a complimentary speech and a parental allusion to the future, that brought a blush to the cheek of that delicate female.

CHAPTER X.

A POST-BAG ROBBERY.

"Onward he comes,
The news of nations lumb'ring at his back."

COWPER.

THIS was followed by a post-bag robbery, always a good "lay." Every postman has his "walk," as you know; and certain houses in the City pay their postman a stipend for the speedier delivery of their letters every morning. This is a profitable matter to the postman, generally doubling his income on a City walk: such a postman, therefore, is a personage of some consequence, and, of course, too great to do his own work. I have observed, through life, that the great art of enjoyment is to get paid well yourself for doing certain work, which you pay somebody else much less to do instead of you. This is what is done throughout all trades, in almost all professions, and universally in every Government department. The taking-the-money department is called "looking after," and "seeing the thing done properly," "assisting," and "advising," and "superintending," and

"employment," and "salary;" but the doing it is entitled "work" and "wages." Dr. Whateley, in his "Easy Lessons on Money," goes into this a little, but not very far. I did not advance quite deep enough into Adam Smith in my prison education, or I might have told you something more about "middlemen," and the "theory of profits," and the "division of labour;" but, be all that as it may, Thomas Camberwell, the postman of the Fenchurch Street District, used to hire another man who was not a postman, and whom he called his "assistant." This assistant postman always met Tom Camberwell at Death's door—that is, at the door of Mr. Death, the mercer, at the top of Leadenhall Street, at which place, in the doorway that retired inwards, Thomas Camberwell used to sort out those particularly early letters. One fine morning in April the two were comfortably dividing a bundle of letters after this fashion, when Wonderful Jack, Lean Jem, and myself "promiscuously" passed by, having settled all about this little affair three weeks previously, and watched and learned the ways of Thomas Camberwell, and all his ins and outs. He had placed a bag of letters on the floor near the shop door, and was, as I have said, occupied in sorting one packet, when in an instant we three darted in; one "collared" the bag, another snatched the letters from Tom Camberwell's hand, and the third pushed the assistant against him. Away we went three different ways,—Wonderful Jack down St. Bevis Marks, myself across Hounsditch, and Lean Jem—how he ran with those spider legs!—

along by Butcher's Row into the Minories! We met, half an hour afterwards, at the Lamb and Flag, Bethnal Green, and divided the plunder in the skittle ground. There was no time to be lost; so I dressed myself, and went and attended to my advertisement, which means that I had always an advertisement in the paper for a light porter or a groom, and used to see the young fellows in the morning by appointment in various disguises, and despatch them to change notes or stolen cheques, thus leaving no possible clue; for there was always one of us to see they came out all right, or else they never saw any one more. I had a few young ones to meet this morning, and they cashed all the stolen cheques for us. But there were several bills, and other securities also, which were plainly valuable, though not negotiable by us; and this put me on to a new move, or rather, the prospect of a new method of robbery. Why should I not be a City man myself—a banker, or something of the kind? The thought fixed itself on my mind. I resolved to become respectable.

There was a great noise about this robbery, and we began to feel uncomfortable. Something must be done to "stall off" the inquiry, which was growing much too hot. At last Wonderful Jack, who was a very clever fellow and a first-rate "patterer," bethought himself of a scheme, and we started off to old Gaffer Broomielaw, in the Back Gardens, Bonner's Fields. A merry night we had with that Prince of Beggars, the best getter-up of an *improvised* supper I ever met with; and the resul

appeared as follows in the morning papers of that period :—

"It would seem that the late robbery of the Fenchurch Street postman's letter-bag resulted rather from the carelessness of the letter carrier than from any premeditated scheme of professed thieves. A tattered, miserable old man, named James Brown, surrendered himself to the police, and confessed the abstraction. He did not, with confederates, 'dart upon' the spoil, but alone, and under pressure of want, 'picked it up' and carried it off. At the station-house he stated that he saw an old blue bag on the sill outside the door of Mr. Death, the mercer: he thought it might contain old boots and shoes. He passed it several times; and at length, seeing no one to whom it appeared to belong, he took it up and walked away with it. In a court in Finsbury he had opened the bag, and found letters in it. There was also some beef and mustard in a saucer, and he devoured the food, 'which,' the poor fellow said, 'he wanted more than anything else.' He opened some of the letters: several contained halves of notes, postage stamps, &c. He could not read writing, but knew enough to be alarmed at, when he saw what he had stolen, and he wandered about all day with the bag. At dusk he put a stone into the bag, went to London Bridge, and tossed it into the river. When arrested he had but twopence in money. Being questioned by the alderman, he said he was a Spitalfields weaver's son in starving want; and

added, 'I think I may as well perish in one way as another, only I should like to finish that book they gave me yesterday at the station before I die.' On inquiring what book, it turned out that the old man's first sight of a Bible had been when one was lent to him in the station-house."

Of course he was detained—a lucky thing for him; for the same afternoon there came fourteen Bibles, large and pocket, for him, and six pounds fourteen shillings and eightpence in small amounts. Next morning the Duchess of Downshire called to see him, and was followed by the wealthy Miss Cobbs. The Hounsditch Station was inaccessible to carriages with ladies, old and young, during the day. The following afternoon, when brought up on the remand, he was bailed out by the Rev. James Anstruther, of St. Martha Wapshot (High Church), and Dr. Long Wyndham, of St. James's-in-the-Marsh (Low Church). His exit from the police office was a triumph; and I never shall forget the grin and the wink of recognition which Gaffer Broomielaw gave me as he walked out between the two clergymen, and was met by Cardinal. Roseman's chaplain and private secretary, just too late to secure his confraternisation.

The river was perseveringly dragged for the lost post-bag, but without effect! Our point was gained. The heat of inquiry passed. The crisis was over, the nine days' wonder ended, and all at the General Post Office slumbered as before. The Secretary had put the Post-

master General into motion, and the Postmaster General the Solicitor, the Solicitor the Police, and there the wave of motion struck against "James Brown," and deflected into space. Perhaps it is still going on in the spheres, for they say motion never rests.

CHAPTER XI.

"MY LADY CAMPBELL AT HOME."

"She's all my fancy painted her."
Song—"*Alice Grey.*"

I HAVE told you about Alice Grey: she now came up to spend a week with me. Talent like hers ought not to lie idle, and we arranged a pretty little *comedietta* for our mutual profit.

In the sweet month of April, just as Hyde Park was fullest, and May Fair most gay, there drove up to the door of Messrs. Flight and Rascall, the eminent jewellers, an elegantly-dressed lady, apparently about thirty-five years of age. She descended from her smart brougham, and stated that she was desirous of looking at some jewellery for Lady Campbell. Her ladyship, she said, wanted to make choice of a very handsome bracelet for a present. After a little show of fastidious taste in the selection of the bracelet, she picked out one worth about £400, and requested it

might be sent to 42, Ragnor Terrace, Hyde Park Gardens, for her ladyship's judgment.

"To whom are we to charge the bracelet?" asked the young man in attendance.

"To Miss Constance Green," was the reply.

The lady then, like a thorough lady, as she was, referred to her bankers, Messrs. Gawk and Brushwood, saying that she would give Messrs. Flight and Rascall a cheque for half the amount, and pay the rest in three months, if agreeable.

The young man civilly replied that he had no doubt such an arrangement would be satisfactory, and appointed to be at Ragnor Terrace between eight and nine in the evening.

As Messrs. Gawk and Brushwood, of Charing Cross Gardens, replied to the inquiry of Messrs. Flight and Rascall, made in due course, that Miss Constance Green was a highly respectable customer of theirs, it was all considered right; and the young shopman that evening, between eight and nine, went accordingly, in company with another assistant, to 42, Ragnor Terrace, where he asked the page who opened the door for "Lady Campbell," handing to the grave young Buttons at the same time the card which he had received from Miss Constance Green. Buttons took "the pasteboard" upstairs, and asked the shopman into the drawing-room. The jewellery he had with him to show to Miss Green, in the expectation of tempting her to further purchases, was of a magnificent description,

consisting of tiaras and other head ornaments to the value of £2500. In the course of a few moments the swan-like Miss Constance Green swept into the room, and asked if he had brought the jewellery. She also requested to know if he had brought the bracelet. He replied that he had done so, and then took it out of a bag, on seeing which she expressed her wish to take it upstairs, for the purpose of showing it to Lady Campbell, upon which the wary youth remarked that he had not the pleasure of knowing her.

"Oh!" exclaimed she, with a dazzling light of innocent perception beaming in her eye, "I perhaps ought to have referred you to my bankers, Gawk and Brushwood."

The cunning fellow knew what the answer would be to that reference already, and at once laid down his weapons of caution at the feet of female beauty and intelligence, as many better men have done before. He placed the bracelet in her hands, and she left the room, closing, as she gracefully stepped forth, the door behind her.

Alas! she never returned. He waited five, ten, fifteen minutes, then rang the bell, but receiving no answer, rang again.

"A louder yet, and yet a louder strain"

upon the bell-rope produced no result. He rushed to the door—tried to open it. Good heavens! it was locked! Horror! He rushed towards the window—

tore back the curtains. The shutters were closed! He would open them. They were barred and nailed! The poker! He would break them open. There was none. He dashed his head against them—he tore them with his nails. At last a voice was heard by the desperate man :—

"Is that you, Bill?"

It was his assistant.

"Police! police!" he shouted.

The house door was forced open, and in rushed everybody.

But where was the lady—where the little page? What said the assistant?

He had remained outside the house, and had seen the lady, and the page behind her, in due course, walk out with such sweet composure, and placid, unruffled dignity, that he had no suspicion. It was only when the head of the alarmed and impetuous young jeweller burst through the disrupted panels of the drawing-room shutters that he became aware of any trick.

Buttons turned up afterwards. He had been casually hired by the lady, who had fitted him out in page's livery. On the evening of the robbery she sent him to deliver a letter in the Strand. As he could not find the person to whom it was addressed (this is the best plan I know of for keeping a fellow out of the way), he came back, and found the police in the house.

The house, also an accomplice in the robbery, got out of the scrape by proving itself to have been hired

of a house agent for Sir John and Lady Campbell, who was thrown off his guard most effectually by receiving £42 down as the rent for the first month.

What made matters worse was, that there really was a Miss Constance Green, a lady of birth and fashion; and Inspector Swisher went down and saw her, and discovered that Alice Grey, under the *sobriquet* of "Louise Mouton" (a very lost mutton certainly), had formerly been engaged as that lady's companion.

Swisher caught her in a second-class carriage of the Great Western Railway. I always told her to ride in a first class, as there are better opportunities; but women have queer notions of economy in travelling matters. He got her boxes, in which he found a man's cap, a wig, a pair of false whiskers, a false moustache, two large pockets, and a letter to himself; but she slipped out on the other side when the train was going sixteen miles an hour; and it was years afterwards, as you may learn on a future occasion, before Alice Grey turned up again. Swisher was never so astounded in his life, as he afterwards told me. "She went down like a ghost, sir." Swisher's a capital fellow, and I am not given to jealousy; but Mrs. Swisher, who is a shrewd woman, has never yet been perfectly satisfied about that getting off of Alice Grey.

As for the robbery itself, the wonder is that tradespeople can be such fools. Half a minute's reference to the Peerage or the Court Guide would have shown Messrs. Flight and Rascall that there was no such a

being as Lady Campbell. Lady Stratheden was Lord Campbell's wife's title; but this is the way that names and effrontery throw people off their guard. Messrs. Flight and Rascall gave gold and silver for words and a pretty face; but if it had been a bill to discount, how different their conduct and inquiries!

CHAPTER XII.

HOW WE ROBBED THE GREAT WESTERN RAILWAY.

"Call oh a man of business in business hours,
Transact your business, and go about your business."
"POOR RICHARD."

THE neatest thing I ever was in was the robbery of the Great Western Railway Station, just about the same time as my previous story. There was an immense noise about it at the time, but nothing was ever found out. I, and Lean Jem, and Wonderful Jack did it; and I will tell you how it was managed. It was done at the old station, before that grand new one was finished. You would hardly believe people could leave such a lot of property so unguarded. But what is every one's business is nobody's.

The booking-offices for first and second class passengers at this station ran side by side with each other, and were entered, each of them, by a separate door from the front yard. Each of them, also, had a door on the other side, through which the passengers, after paying their money, passed on to the platform from which the trains start. These two offices had a pair

of folding doors between them, through which the clerks were enabled to pass to and fro without leaving their positions behind the counters. The egress from the second-class booking-office was by a pair of folding doors, which at night were fastened by a single bolt from the inside running up into the top of the door frame. A lock was thought unnecessary, because no stranger could reach the inner platform except through the pay offices; and therefore even the fact of the two doors not quite closing, but leaving a crack open, was not regarded as important.

That crack cost the company a couple of thousand pounds! At half-past ten on Sunday night, when the last train arrived, Lean Jem, myself, and Wonderful Jack also arrived by it, slipped out of it quickly, crossed the line while all the officers of the railway were busy attending to the passengers, and made our way among the carriages over to the other side, which all the porters and booking-clerks had left.

A crooked nail (such was our simple key to wealth; and mind you, a crooked wire will open almost any lock in the world—ask Hobbs), let down the bolt of the second-class office door through the crack, and gave us admission. We closed it behind us, and found ourselves, like so many clerks, before six tills, all full of money taken in the day. We forced the six in succession with a jemmy, and cleared them of their contents; then we passed into the first-class office, and did the same precisely. Here, however, there was

an iron safe in a cupboard, which I knew to contain valuables—articles such as jewels and the like—sent for transmission by railway, and deposited here pending their despatch. As luck would have it, this precious jewel casket had only a common lock, of which Wonderful Jack made short work; and we got in, and removed the safe bodily, with £1200 in notes, gold, and silver.

Returning back into the second-class office, we unlocked the front door, and stepped out into the courtyard with our luggage (the iron safe), like gentlemen. We had a cab of our own in waiting, and drove off rejoicing.

My share of that "swag" was £800. Yes, we laughed then; but what were our feelings at discovering afterwards that in the same cupboard were TWO BOXES OF BULLION, worth £5000 each! We had left them behind us! We felt as if we ourselves had been the parties robbed.

I took another "shine" out of the Great Western Railway afterwards myself. A London banking-house despatched a box containing one thousand five hundred sovereigns to their correspondent at Worcester. The box was well nailed up, secured with iron clasps, and weighed 125 lbs. A confidential and special messenger brought it to the Paddington Station, and delivered it into the hands of the guard immediately before the train started. The guard himself placed the box of coin in the compartment adjoining his own box, the said compartment being occupied with parcels only,

and between the two there was a communication by means of the aperture over the break. What could be safer—more sure? "All right," said the guard, on receiving the parcel; "I'll take care of it." The messenger stopped to see the train off: there was not a minute's interval between the delivery of the box and its departure by the train.

On the arrival of the train at Bristol, the box was found to have been broken open, and the contents abstracted. How this could have been effected was a wonder, especially without exciting attention.

The thieves were never discovered. No one thought any more of it, except the only two who knew of it—myself, who am now communicating with you, and Frederick Manning, the guard, who afterwards met with an untimely end in the immediate vicinity of Horsemonger Lane, in company with his accomplished wife.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOW WE ROBBED "THE JEWELLERS."

"Locks, bolts, and bars soon fly asunder;
Then to rifle, rob, and plunder."

Old Song—"The Wolf."

WE had now realised some money. Wonderful Jack determined to go on with the trade; Lean Jem made up his mind to go into the police; and I retired altogether from business.

Before we broke up our little party we determined to have one good series of consecutive burglaries, and prepared accordingly.

Now, housebreaking is a regular business of itself—requires skill as well as nerve, and also great self-control to avoid cruelty, which is dangerous, and bloodshed, which is utter ruin.

Perhaps you would like to know something about it. I will set out by saying that all your fastenings and locks, however necessary to keep your doors closed, are of no use against the housebreaker. We don't always unlock a door or draw a bolt; but, for all that, we can

always get into any house. Did you ever see a set of our tools? First a small saw, about as long as a common table-knife; next a crowbar, which is like the top of a cooper's adze, but stronger;—slip in the thin edge under a door or a shutter, and put your foot on the other end, and there is your leverage that will move the world;—a ripping chisel, a gouge or hollow chisel, and a steel bar with a straight gripping hook, divided into two teeth at either end, but reversed in the fixing on. We almost always go in at the back, unless you leave your front door open, which a great many people do every night, as the police will tell you. Your servant goes out, and the thief walks in; or you forget to shut it yourself when you come in from the theatre; or you leave the key outside when you return from a supper party. If there is much trouble we cut through the panel of the door with a centre-bit, when the skeleton key or picklock fails, and then slip in an arm, and unbolt and unbar the door at our leisure. We never make a noise in breaking a window, but lift it out on a sheet of brown paper, which we paste over it. As soon as we are in the house we light a candle, and unbar and unbolt all the front doors, so as to be able to run out. We begin to rob at the top of the house, and work down; and, in rifling and rummaging drawers, pull out the bottom one first, and leave them all open, one on the top of the other, not stopping to shut them. Now you know as much as I do.

We commenced in High Street, Islington, where

we broke in and plundered a silversmith's shop of 40 gold watches, 50 silver watches, 9 gold armlets, 220 gold signet and ladies' rings, 150 gold and plated scarf pins, 90 gold seals and keys, 20 gold necklets and *chatelaines*, and a quantity of gold and silver pencil-cases, to the value of £1000. We had some time to wait, as Wonderful Jack had got into "the jug" on a charge of bigamy; but we "squared" the woman, and had the father and mother both upset in a cab, and bruised to such an extent that they could not appear.

Next we turned up at Factonini's, at Bradford, and got £1800 worth. The proprietors were Roman Catholics, and went to mass, so we had plenty of time to clear the shop out on the Sunday morning. We worked in through an empty house next door, out of the upper front room, which once formed a portion of the jeweller's house, and was divided from it only by a slight wooden partition. I had lodged here years before with Alice Grey, and knew the place well. Wonderful Jack cut a square hole with a centre-bit, and Lean Jem got through and cleared old Factonini's premises of 40 gold and 45 silver English lever watches, 40 gold and 35 silver Geneva watches, 150 gold wedding rings (I sent one to Alice Grey), 50 gold hoops, 50 gold chains, 6 gold Albert chains, 5 gold fob chains and topaz seals, 4 gold bracelets, 24 silver guards, 6 silver Albert guards, 3 plated fob chains (I like to be particular when I can), and a number of second-hand watches. I kept a look-out, a-

signalised to Jem and Jack, who were obliged to leave a great lot behind them of heavy plate that was not handy to move.

Next we robbed, at Bath, old Pisher's of £1500, and then across from Oxford to Birmingham and Stratford, where we broke into Charlecote House, and made off with all the old relics of the Lacy family, of which I made a capital sale afterwards to certain *virtuoso* lovers of Shakspeare. A blundering rustic rogue, whom we were obliged to admit of our party, was caught here; but he knew nothing of us, and had nothing to give up, so we left him to his fate. Had he been a Londoner, or one of ourselves, we should have stood by him.

We afterwards went to Derby, where we did a good business at a jeweller's in the market-place. None of these towns are too abundant in police, so we found out a sure plan, which was to get up a row in some other distant part of the town, while one of us effected the robbery. Country people always sleep soundly: once in the house at night, and the dogs quieted, there is nothing to fear. Even the thieves in the country commit their robberies early, that they may go to bed themselves in due time.

I have told you that we had not always occasion to break in, or force our way. There was a striking instance of this.

Mr. Bloomgarters, of Waterloo Street, a silversmith and jeweller of world-wide fame, was too genteel a man

and too wealthy a tradesman to live over his shop; so he kept a country villa, and let his own house in lodgings. He had the good fortune to secure three excellent lodgers, Lean Jem, Wonderful Jack, and myself, disguised as American gentlemen. On Saturday evening he went out, as usual, to Richmond Lodge. On Sunday we gave the maid-servant, left for our convenience, a holiday, of which she took advantage, while we did the same of her absence. That morning we cut a hole in the drawing-room floor; let ourselves down by a rope into the shop, that was well locked and barred, of course; and then hauled up our prey of glorious plate and jewels, watches and rings, and chains innumerable, divided it, and walked off, leaving the deluded Bloomgarters nothing behind but a rope to hang himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

LEAN JEM TELLS HIS STORY.

"After long experience of the world, I affirm, before God, I never knew a rogue who was not unhappy."

JUNIUS.

AFTER this last affair our partnership ended. We had resolved to part, each of us having got what ought to content him; besides, it is always advisable, after continued success of any working party, to break it up and separate, so as to leave the police no clue.

So I gave them both a capital dinner at the Star and Garter, at Richmond; and after dinner, while Wonderful Jack was smoking his pipe (I never could get him to take to cigars), and I was sipping my claret, and tickling my palate occasionally with an early strawberry, Lean Jem told his story:—

"I have no business here—I mean with you. I was always a hard-working fellow, and know something about metals and mixing them, and am both a blacksmith and a whitesmith, as you can plainly see. What

has been the ruin of me has been my fellow-workmen and their accursed Union, which won't allow a clever workman to get on, but endeavours to keep us all on a dead level. If you know Sheffield at all you will know this well. They don't stick at blowing a man up with gunpowder there if he offend them. Our men use gunpowder, but the savages will stab and murder one another.

"I was working in the house of a large manufacturer at Sheffield, when he received a very great order for America, to supply which he was tied to a certain time, and had to send the goods by a particular vessel. The last day had arrived, and the work was close upon finished when the clock struck four, and, it being Saturday, all the men prepared to leave. He offered us any money to remain. I would cheerfully have done so, but the men were prohibited from working overtime by some regulation of their Union. Yet if the work were thus left unfinished at the last moment, the order would be lost; so our master called us together, and showed that he would be out of pocket several thousands. I was their foreman, and he addressed me, saying that a few hours would suffice to complete the order, and he must insist on our finishing our work. He reminded us that he had always been a considerate employer, and said it was wrong that we should have no care for his interests when he had so large a stake at risk, especially while he was willing to pay the full value of all the work required to be done

He concluded by declaring that if we went away, and left him, as he called it, 'in the lurch,' not one man of us should ever enter the shop doors again.

"We stepped aside to talk it over, and I went back to tell him that we all agreed it was very hard; that we knew his kindness, and felt it; but that the union forbade any man in the trade working after four o'clock on Saturday afternoons. He remonstrated, and we took ten minutes more to discuss the matter amongst ourselves. The result was that, seeing the circumstances in so strong a light, we one and all agreed to go on with the work, on condition that he should undertake to protect us, and we also warned him to look after himself. He sent immediately for a superintendent of police, who stationed a police officer at the door of every workman, and this officer guarded the man to and from his work. However, we got tired of this at last. No English working-man likes to have the police about him; it makes him feel like a thief or a spy. Better a soldier any day than a policeman, though neither is regarded as quite respectable. Besides, there was always the policeman's drink, and that's no trifle, as you know. So the affair was at last settled by a heavy fine being paid to the Union on account of the men.

"This made it right for the men, but not for me. I was driven away, hunted down by the Union, and expelled every shop I went into, all the men resigning immediately, by order of the Union, until I was dismissed.

"As for the master, they got up a riot, and burnt his private house down, himself and wife and child having the greatest difficulty in escaping.

"This drove me to misery, to starvation, and lastly to coining—my knowledge of medals and moulding, of course, being available for this purpose.

"I shall now go into the police as a detective, but none of my old pals need fear my peaching."

Poor fellow! he proved an excellent officer, and died in the service, being shot by a treacherous, cowardly German, whom he had apprehended at Hamburgh, and was bringing over to this country. The rascal got him into his cabin, and, stooping down, pulled out a pistol, and shot the poor fellow to the heart.

CHAPTER XV.

WONDERFUL JACK.

"A famous man was Robin Hood."

WORDSWORTH.

OUR game, nearing to its close, began to be a very bold one at this period. We were determined men, who kept well together, stood shoulder to shoulder, and acted with spirit; in fact, we had become what a huntsman, speaking of young hounds, would call "blooded," and ran on, full-mouthed, eager, and checked by no scruples. The police did not like us at all from the first, and we finally established such a character that they were afraid of us. The public were terrified by a succession of burglaries, attended with more or less violence to the person, which gave rise to a general panic. The most daring of them only can be recorded in these pages; but the curious inquirer will find, in the journals of the day, astonishing proofs of the prevalence of this crime. That robbery attended with violence to the person should be the prevailing crime in a civilised country, with its police,

telegraph, and detective machinery, is a singular fact in the philosophy of civilisation, and I have no doubt will be found frequently alluded to in the lectures delivered at this time in the several prisons.

We always went out of town some distance in the home counties, so as to get back to London by the afternoon, if not early in the morning, just as the horse police were off duty. Thus we "tumbled up" a reverend gentleman at Arlington, in Sussex, soon after he had been tucked up in bed at eleven P.M. After taking two watches from the servants' rooms, Wonderful Jack and myself, both masked, and I with a drawn sword, stood over the reverend gentleman, and made him tell where he kept his money. He preached at us, and spoke of treasures laid up in another place, which he seemed to have no objection to share with us, and he talked about our sin; but without going into religious disputes, we forced him to hand over £40, then locked him in his bedroom, while we made tea for ourselves, with some nice cream and fresh butter, before we left his premises.

Old Porter, at Workingham, gave us a good "swag" of £240 in watches and jewellery; and at Manningtree we robbed a hairdresser by cutting holes through his back door. Wonderful Jack dropped the candle, and set some of the wigs frizzling, so that the smoke roused the family, and there was a great hubbub in the papers about our cruelty in setting the house on fire; but I can assure you we did not intend it. No man can be responsible for an accident.

Returning homewards, we opened the Dublin Castle public-house at Camden Town, and there a policeman collared Wonderful Jack as he was carrying off £25; but Jack turned round and "knifed" him. The blade, however, struck the constable in the face, and the brute struck Jack with his truncheon, knocked him down, and captured him. Of course Jack was had up, but he held his tongue, and kept very quiet; for all that, however, he was remanded, because they said a great deal would come out at the next examination. So it did, and so did Jack himself; for they brought him from the House of Detention, and caged him up in one of the cells of the Marlborough Street police court. There were Jack and four others, all in one den, grinning through the bars; the door was locked with Chubb's Patent, and tightened with two bolts on the outside, quite snug, safe, certain, and secure. But Jack was a wonderful fellow—as fine a whitesmith as ever filed a gun-lock; and when, about a quarter after eleven, the jailer went again to the cell for the purpose of taking Jack before the magistrates—three detectives being ready to swear to eight or nine burglaries in which he had been the principal—he found the door all right to look at, but when he came to open it, two of the lot, to his astonishment, were clean gone out, and only three left.

Nothing was seen of Wonderful Jack any more until next June, when, on the Derby day—Jack was fond of races and show—there was Wonderful Jack, in a shiny white hat, and a light grey coat, and a blue veil, as big as

a lord, with his fourteenth wife, in a cockety round hat with a feather, by his side, and a hamper under the seat, driving over London Bridge in a chaise cart, with a fast blood horse in the shafts, on their way to Epsom races. Up jumps the Detective—down on his head comes Jack's life-preserver! The poor young man was always timid, and carried one to keep off thieves. Out jumped Jack, and off! "Stop him!" was the cry; but who dared to do it? Jack was five feet ten, and as bright and as light as Allsopp's ale. He brandished his life-preserver as he flew along, and swore like a lord, in a manly voice, that he would "cut the liver" out of any one that ventured to touch him. Half a dozen tried it on, but Jack "downed" them with his desperate blows, thrown out at random right and left, until a fellow named CHEERFUL treacherously caught the brave fellow in his arms, tripped up his heels, wrenched the life-preserver from his hand, and the best of good fellows, and the lightest-hearted of burglars, was in the hands of seven policemen. Cheerful got a knock that made him mournful for life, and the policeman did not live long to tell the story of Jack's capture. They tried Jack, and they found him guilty, as they always do such good fellows; and as he made an attempt to escape out of Newgate, and failed, they looked sharp after him in the Model Prison at Pentonville, especially after they found he had cut through the bars of his window.

But Wonderful Jack was not to be done by Detectives

or jailers. One Sunday evening he went to the chapel with the other prisoners, and was never seen again. He had managed to conceal about him the sheets and rope of his bed, the spring of the cell door (which he cleverly fashioned into a "jemmy"), and a metal weight. As soon as he entered his compartment in the chapel, while the others were putting their noses down on the shelf before them for a little private prayer, Jack forced up the flooring, got under the gallery, broke his way through a zinc ventilator, and gained a small closet. A window afforded him the means to get on to a parapet wall. He walked along this, and eventually got on to the roof of the governor's house, six feet above the wall. Here he took off all his prison clothes except his trousers and blue shirt; left the garments, with the sheets and other articles, upon the housetop; and sliding down a gable-end wall, got clear off. Next night the governor of the jail received the following letter:—

"Wonderful Jack presents his compliments to the governor of the Model Prison, Pentonville, and begs to apprise him of his happy escape from the jail. He is in excellent spirits, and can assure the governor that it would be useless for his men to pursue him; that he is quite safe, and in a few days intends to proceed to the continent to recruit his health."

CHAPTER XVI.

WHAT BECAME OF WONDERFUL JACK.

"The course of true love never did run smooth."
SHAKSPEARE.

WONDERFUL JACK, as I have hinted before, had a weakness on the side of women. He had a great respect for them, and never took advantage either of their fondness or credulity; for Jack was a man of high honour, and therefore he always married them. They generally brought him a little money, for Jack was a prudent man; so he was never without a comfortable home, and a nice little wife to look bright and welcome on his return from business. Whether Jack or the women were changeable I know not, or whether Wonderful Jack was occasionally troubled with scruples of conscience; but certain it is, he every now and then used to do penance in the solitude of a bachelor, but was sure afterwards to re-appear in domestic life. Jack's last wife was a woman of business. She used to get into situations by means of false characters, whic'

Jack gave her, as a gentleman whose wife had gone into the country. She then re-assumed her position as a matron, and absconded with the plate and jewellery, or let Jack into the house to rob it. But Wonderful Jack was caught at last through a certain housemaid, one Martha Ralph, who, being left in charge of her master's house in Warwick Street, Pimlico, happened to sit up reading an hour later than usual, and fell asleep on the bed in her clothes. She woke, and, hearing a noise towards the morning, called her grandfather; but not receiving any answer, went to bed again, where she had not been long when in walked Wonderful Jack, with a light in one hand, and the kitchen poker in the other, on his way from the plate cupboard, which was in a cellar on a level with Martha's bedroom. Poor Martha, mistaking the kind intentions of my friend Jack, who was the soul of politeness to the sex, screamed out violently, whereupon Jack, as in duty bound, remonstrated, enforcing his objections with a few playful taps from the poker. This not succeeding, he grasped the young woman affectionately by the throat. Jack finished his work, and cleared out; and then the young woman woke up, at five in the morning, with a rope round her neck, and five awkward wounds on the head. This imprudence, in giving way so far to his feelings, cost Jack his liberty for life, and, what was more, entirely broke up our party. It led, most unfortunately, to the apprehension of Moses Moses, of Gravel Lane, Houns-

ditch, where the property was traced. On his premises were found goods of unimaginable variety; in fact, his house was one great depôt. There was a waggon-load of scarlet damask, black and crimson cloth, doeskins, silver and plate, shawls and the like, watches without cases, precious stones without settings, and rings without stones. Poor Moses, one of the quietest of men, was transported, and so was Jack's wife. I saw them years afterwards. They are both well-to-do people. Jack is an auctioneer and consignee, on a very large scale, to several London houses (whose names you won't find in the Directory), and his wife (his fifteenth) is the most fashionable lady in Australia.

I attributed this little adventure, which terminated so unfavourably, to Wonderful Jack's being too hungry and hasty—a fact to be accounted for by his recent nine months' residence in the county jail of Westmoreland, where the clever fellow, in his temporary absence from London, which was rendered convenient by circumstances alluded to in the previous chapter, had run away with and married, at Gretna Green, a young lady with £10,000, who, however, unfortunately for Jack's blighted affections, happened to be only twelve years and three months old. Jack had gone down with an excursion ticket, that he found in some gentleman's coat pocket by mistake, on a tour to the Lakes, and happened to catch sight of the young lady, and to hear some particulars about her from the servant maid of the school at which she was. So he introduced himself to

her schoolmistress, one Miss Rector, as a music master. Jack was an all-accomplished man, and knew every instrument, from a hay-fork to a hurdy-gurdy; so he was engaged immediately, by the fascinated Miss Rector, to give lessons to her young ladies. But Miss Rector, being inclined to jealousy and strictness, soon found that the young lady was giddily inclined, and that Jack was no musician. So he was obliged to retire. One fine 24th of May, however, Miss Rector and her fifteen fair pupils took a day's pleasure on Ullswater Lake, and at four o'clock next morning the governess found her street door open. She blamed her maid-servant's carelessness, and fastened it. But the stable door was shut when the steed had been stolen, and the little Miss was nowhere to be found. The police and the telegraph were set to work at once. From Penrith to Carlisle the impatient Miss Rector urged her flying steeds. From Carlisle, on by the railway, to Gretna the pursuit was hot. At Sark tollbar, the first house over the borders, there was news of "young Lochinvar;" for Murray, the blacksmith parson, told the scared governess of a marriage, and showed her the certificate. Jack was triumphant; but, somehow or other, the lawyers managed to find a flaw, as the girl was so young. Poor Jack was "grabbed" at Carlisle, the girl being almost torn from her "dear husband." Oh! there was some rare sport at the trial, and some fine, feeling speeches. It was as good as one of the old-fashioned comedies.

There was the Gretna priest, and his book of marriage certificates, and Wonderful Jack's make-up as the lover, and the young girl's despair, and the father's madness—no want of tragedy. The letters, too, were highly interesting. I made copies of two of them. Here they are :—

"My dear John,

"I received your lines, and fully understand what they mean, and I give my consent to all your proposals. It is a great comfort to me to think that at last I have got your heart a little my way. You never will find me unfaithful. So, with kind love, believe me

"Yours ever affectionately,

"Annie Jane Green.

"Your note gave me such pleasure this morning that I could not take my breakfast. I am so glad you have given up that formal name by which you used to call me, my dear John."

Tolerable, that, for a twelve years and three months' Miss; but there is no fathoming these feminines. I believe they are more than half mad more than three parts of their lives. Love-letters are always interesting reading, for we have all been fools, or are going to be; so here is the other :—

"Ivy House.

"My dearest John,

"You have no idea of the joy with which I received your letter. You asked me to say one word. I think it will be 'yes;' and you asked me to fix the day and way of escape. I shall say next Thursday week, and so get up in the morning and be dressed about seven o'clock; then Bella" (the maid-servants are always friends to true love) "will leave the front door off the catch. I am to leave it open to set our tyrant off her guard, and then to slip down the street; but I shall leave you to fix the place where we will meet, but at all events it must be retired. You need not have had any misgivings in laying open your heart before me. You might have been sure I should only have been too happy at your doing so. I should have inclosed another stamp for the one you sent me, but old Crossy takes care to keep them herself, and if I ask her for one she will know who it is for. And now, John, when you write to Bella, send something for me, and say if you accord with my arrangements. And now, with kindest and truest love, believe me

"Ever your affectionate, sincere, and true

"Annie.

"I cannot safely write with anything but pencil."

Wonderful Jack said in his defence that he thought the young lady was seventeen years old, and that he dearly loved her. The rascal! The jury, if it had not been

for the judge, and if Jack had been born in their own county, would have acquitted him, both against law and evidence. As it was, he left the court with every one's pity and sympathy. I need not tell you that he was well taken care of, while in jail, by a subscription of the young ladies in the vicinity. Nobody seemed to pity the unfortunate father. As for the girl herself, she was married, a few years afterwards, to an Irish Member of Parliament, well known among his friends as a great collector of second-hand curiosities.

CHAPTER XVII.

WHAT BECAME OF ME.

"We ply the memory, we load the brain,
Blind rebel wit, and double chain on chain;
Confine the thought to exercise the breath,
And keep in the pale of words, till death.
Whate'er the talent, or howe'er designed,
We hang one jingling padlock on the mind."

POPE—*The Dunciad.*

JACK'S trick of choking off detection was a dangerous one. It was evidently an imperfect tradition of Thuggism, and dangerously imperfect, as I found to my cost; for when I left him at Appleby, after the assizes, I stopped at Manchester, with Lean Jem, to look in at Mr. Howard's, the jeweller; and only seeing his daughter there, Lean Jem went in and asked her the price of a diamond ring, telling her he had not come there on his own account, but on behalf of the captain of a vessel, for whom he requested from her one of their business cards. She turned round to write the name of the street—11, Market Street—upon the card, when he suddenly threw his arm round her neck, grasped her throat and mouth tightly, and dragged her into the sitting-room at the back of the shop. I then ·apped round from Corporation Street, opened the

door, and began to clear the shop. We got off with £300, and this was in mid-day. However, I was caught before I could leave Manchester, tried, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment in Lancashire jail; for the girl was not quite stupefied, but saw me reflected in a looking-glass as I robbed the shop, and swore to my face.

I did not very much mind this, as I was getting tired of such mere thieving, and had resolved on a higher flight, for which I felt that some further progress in my education was necessary; and where could I possibly obtain a better one, or so comfortably and cheaply, as in jail? Let me see, I have a paper that contains a list of the lectures I received while in Lancashire jail. It is well worth perusal, as showing the admirable method we have for improving the national thieves, and making them good and happy, as well as comfortable.

You must remember that I was considered an exemplary prisoner, and was treated accordingly.

This is the programme:—

PROGRAMME.

MARCH 10—14.—Form and Diurnal Motion of the Earth. The Atmosphere. Australia. English Grammar. Difference between Education and Instruction.

MARCH 17—21.—Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties. Remarkable Inventions. Mr. Kavanagh's paper read on this evening: Man—his duty to God; his relation to his fellows. The Atmosphere and its Uses.

MARCH 24—28.—List of subjects mislaid.

APRIL 1—5.—Physical Geography and its Curiosities. The Electric Telegraph and its Uses. On Self-denial and Decision of Character. Some Remarkable Inventions. Canada and its Resources.

APRIL 7—11.—The Seasons, the Calendar, and the Tides. Works of God. Wonders of Science. Temperance and the Test of Drunkenness. What Machinery has done for the World.

APRIL 14—18.—Mysteries of the Deep. Frugality. The Post Office and its History. Emigration. Prisons, past and present.

APRIL 21—25.—Sleep and Dreaming. Morning of the World. The Crown of Labour. Wine and the Wine Lands. Natal and its Resources.

APRIL 27 TO MAY 1.—Moderation in Anger. Who should Emigrate. The Beer-shop Evil. The Water we Drink. The Labourer in his Moral and Physical Conditions.

MAY 5—9.—The Laws of England. The National Debt. The Funds and Banks. Lives of Great Men: No. 1. Napoleon III. The Employer and the Employed. Great Battles: Waterloo and Trafalgar.

MAY 12—16.—Conscientiousness. Lives of Great Men: No. 2. Lord Palmerston. What to Eat, Drink, and Avoid. Natural Magic. Great Battles: Trafalgar.

MAY 19—23.—Conscientiousness in the Discharge of our Duties. The Soil we Cultivate. Capital and Labour. The Water we Drink. The Rights of Others.

MAY 26—30.—Moderation in Anger. Who should Emigrate. The Beer-shop Evil. The Water we Drink. Microscopic Illustrations. The Labourer in his Moral, Intellectual, and Physical Conditions.

JUNE 2—6.—Courtesy and Politeness. Labour the Duty of all Men. Chemistry of Common Life.

JUNE 9—13.—Magnanimity and Heroism. Agriculture: No. 1. Rotation of Crops. Emigration: No. 1. Australia. Industry and Frugality. Form of the Earth.

JUNE 16—20.—English Grammar. Motions of the Earth. The Nightmare and the Daymare. Emigration: No. 2. New South Wales. Agriculture: No. 2. Elements of Organic Bodies.

JUNE 23—27.—Money: how to Use and Prize it. The Rewards of Knowledge. Domestic Animals: No. 1. The Dog. Remarkable Men: Louis Philippe. Emigration: No. 3. Port Philip and Melbourne.

JUNE 30 TO JULY 4.—Truth and Trust. Geological Condition of the Earth. The Air we Breathe. The Human Frame. Western Australia.

JULY 7—11.—The Form and Magnitude of the Earth. The Bank and the Fireside. The Water we Drink. The Ruins of Creation. The Gold Fields of Australia.

JULY 14—18.—Conscientiousness respecting Reputation and Property of Others. Coal and the Coal Mines. Mysteries of the Deep. Canada and her Resources.

JULY 21—25.—Forbearance and Forgiveness. The Race of Man. Life of Alexander Selkirk. The Plants we Cultivate.

JULY 28 TO AUGUST 1.—Slander. Rivers and Lakes of the World. Endowments of God to Man. The Bread we Eat. English Grammar.

AUGUST 4—8.—Electric Telegraph, Anecdotes of. Mines and Minerals. Self-denial and Decision of Character. Lives of Great Men: Columbus. Physical Geography: Lecture No. 1.

AUGUST 11 — 15. — Emigration. Life and Death of the Drunkard. Commerce. Precious Metals and Precious Stones. The World of Plants.

AUGUST 18—22.—Conscientiousness in adhering to a Promise. Vegetable Kingdom. Thunder and Lightning. Victoria and Port Philip. Physical Geography: Lecture No. 2.

AUGUST 25 — 29. — Contentment and Religious Repose of Mind. Clouds and Storms. Structure of the Earth. Howard the Philanthropist. Canada and her Resources.

SEPTEMBER 1—5.—Conscientiousness respecting Rights of Others. The Drainage and Natural Features of Europe. Temperance and Intemperance. The Human Heart. The Mechanical Powers.

SEPTEMBER 8—12.—Conduct towards Inferiors and Superiors. The Bank and the Fireside. Circulation of the Blood. English Grammar and Dictation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ESCAPE FROM LANCASTER JAIL.

"As men who long in prison dwell,
With lamps that glimmer round the cell,
Whene'er their suff'ring years are run,
Spring forth to greet the glitt'ring sun."

PARNELL.

HAVING now, as I thought, completed my education, it was time that I should make use of it in the world for the benefit of others, and myself especially. To do this, it was necessary I should have a larger scope for the exercise of my abilities than the narrow limits of a prison wall.

But this, apparently, was by no means an easy matter to accomplish. I was in a model prison, to work through whose walls would defy the patience of years, and I had no years to lose; for I was already twenty-five, and had my work to do in making a fortune wherewith to retire at forty-five. Besides, had I worked through this wall, I should have been no better afterwards; for my room was in a third story, twenty-five feet from the

ground, as I found by taking a trigonometrical survey of it from the yard outside. Such are the advantages of education; so useful does knowledge of every kind turn up to us, under circumstances least expected. My logic, or ratiocinative lessons, now came into play. If I had not been in jail I should not have learnt trigonometry, and if I had not learnt trigonometry I should not have got out of jail; so that the natural equipoise of the system, or the accommodation of truth to existent extraneous facts by the ratiocinative system, was thus arrived at by means of the internal additional circumstance of trigonometrical knowledge externally applied —a conclusion which I need not tell you enabled me to go to work with so much the greater satisfaction.

Now that I knew the height from the ground, all that remained to be done was, first, to get outside the window; and secondly, to procure a rope long enough to reach to the ground. Now, as regards the first, there was a window; but this was protected by iron bars, each an inch and a half thick. As I had no file or saw, this was a matter of some difficulty. Luckily, I remembered what a certain fellow, named "Bob the Gipsy," had told me. He said a thread of worsted taken out of a stocking was as good as a file any day. I picked out a thread, rubbed it in the dust, and set to work at a bar. To my delight, after an hour or two's scratching, I found it work; and at last, of course after great patience, it cut through the bar as clean as a knife! The bar being cut through at the bottom, and

fitting into the stonework at the top, I had only to work it backwards and forwards, and the leverage thus given speedily unlodged the iron above, and the other bars. This gave me egress; and what is more, furnished me with a kind of anchor or grapnel in the bars themselves. Now for a rope. They had set me to work in making cocoa-fibre mats, which rendered this portion of the business easy; for I plaited a rope fifty-one feet long, and about three inches thick, out of the fibre of which the mats are made. You see them in all the "Companies'" offices. How I used to laugh as I walked over them, when a Director and "Chairman of the Board," years afterwards! With this rope, and the bars that I fastened in the centre of it, I constructed a kind of drag. I then placed the rope round one of the bars running outside the window, slid down it, withdrew the rope, and slipped off my clogs (we all wear wooden clogs, to keep our feet warm, in Lancaster Castle). This enabled me to walk without making too much noise—I was always of a retiring disposition—to the west side of the building, where I met with an obstruction to my further progress in the shape of a boundary wall about twenty-five feet high; but, as if on purpose to facilitate my honest endeavours, here also I found a heap of coal, that took off at least four feet of the height. I was thus enabled with the greater ease to double my rope and throw it over the wall; when, working it about until the drag had got fast underneath the stone at the top, which projects—of course for the

accommodation of prisoners under such circumstances, and similarly furnished as I was—about three or four inches from the bricks. I drew myself up to the top, changed the drag to the other side of the coping, made it secure, and then slid down outside the boundary wall, drawing the rope after me. Divesting myself of my prison clothes, I then got easily over another outside wall (of course made much lower for my comfort), about ten feet high, and landed in a quiet street, of course without a watchman. It was six o'clock next morning before the night watchmen discovered my escape, from seeing a bar missing outside my cell. Batches of police were started off in all directions, but to no avail. There was much to be done in the world before Jack Horsleydown would be within a prison's walls again. I started off on an excursion to the Lakes; got down to the Cumberland coast, thence to Liverpool by sea, thence to Holyhead by the steam packet, thence to Conway by rail, and thence into South Wales.

CHAPTER XIX.

HOW I ROBBED DR. BOWRING.

"He ranges all his thoughts
In square battalions, proud to meet the shock
Of time and space—himself a numerous host."

DR. WATTS.

As soon as I reached South Wales I lost no time in hunting up Bob the Gipsy. I found him near Maestag, close to Lynir Iron Works, and it was here I first saw and robbed the celebrated linguist, Dr. Bowring, now Sir John Bowring. He was then Chairman of the Lynir Company, of which his brother Charles was manager. Bob and I happened to hear that the manager was in the habit of going once a fortnight in a gig to Bridgend, for the purpose of fetching the money to pay the miners' wages, and I suggested to Bob that robbing him, at once, of the whole lot together would be far preferable, and better in accordance with the economical principles I had been taught in jail, than cheating the men by driblets, as Bob wished to do, after they had received it in wages. When I talked

about middlemen, and the attrition of money in passing through various hands, Bob did not understand me; but when I proposed to "collar the whole swag," his eyes glistened, and he assented to take his share of the danger.

Mr. Charles Bowring, whom I have often met since at dinner parties, and who is a kind of financial oracle in his way, cashed his cheque for £1000 at Bridgend, and brought away £600 in gold, £60 in silver, and the rest in notes, the whole being placed in a bag, and deposited beneath the seat of the gig. Coming out of the town, he took up his brother, the doctor; and the two started homewards at noon, in broad daylight, though in the month of November. They had got about five miles pleasantly discoursing, when about midway, in a lonely place on the ascent of a hill, "two stout fellows" (neither Gipsy Bob nor myself was at all stout or strong) stopped the gig, and, "presenting their pistols" (we had only a couple of sticks), "demanded their money or their lives" (not a word of it; we only said to them, "Hand over the bag, Master Bowring; that's all we want"). Neither the doctor nor Charley showed fight. Quite the contrary; the doctor, I remember, tried to speak the gipsy tongue to Bob; but Bob laughed at him, and swore if he went on with that gibberish he would give him a crack on the head. However, the two learned men handed over to the two thieves the one thousand pounds; and then we unharnessed the mare, gave her a flanker, and sent her

317431

spinning home. Bob wanted to kill her, but I would not have it. I have always set my face against bloodshed of any kind, except in self-defence; then, as I learn from the authorities, the natural abstract right reverts to a man, and he may kill another to save his own life—as, also, he may steal. They argue both points very fairly, but I never knew any man stop to argue when this point was once arrived at. In fact, I am inclined to believe that the majority of the world go on acting and doing, without any knowledge whatever of what all these very great and learned people have written to guide them. However, to go on with my story. Bob the Gipsy and myself made off into the woods, where we parted, and I found my way across the country into Monmouthshire, with the notes and gold, leaving Bob the sixty pounds in silver for his present share, the greater portion of which he buried in the wood before I left him. As for the two Bowrings, the doctor remained where he was sitting, by the roadside, and wrote a poem on the subject, in which he made himself a courtier of Queen Elizabeth; his brother Charles, his page, a young lady in disguise; myself, Owen Tudor, then on his way to London; and Bob the Gipsy, a bastard descendant of Edward the Black Prince. It was a very fine poem, and I have an illustrated edition of it in my chambers.

As for Charles Bowring, he flew into a mighty rage when he saw his brother, the doctor, coolly take out his pencil and note-book, and ran back himself at once

on the road towards Bridgend. Here he soon came to a farm-house, where he borrowed a horse, rode into the town, and back to the mine, alarmed the country, raised the *posse comitatus*, turned out all the workmen to search, sent out armed and mounted constables along the roads and by-ways, and offered a large reward.

By eleven o'clock poor Black Bob was captured. A Welsh constable, who had been a milkman in London, and was rather acute, was watching on the turnpike road, near a gate that leads up Margam Moors. About eleven o'clock Bob came sneaking along over the moor from the wood, and was just moving from the gateway when the Welshman spoke to him, and inquired who he was. Bob said he was one of the men at work on the railway, then in course of construction; but the constable had his suspicions, particularly as the Gipsy, who was always too fond of his enjoyments, and never postponed them to business, as he ought to have done, suggested, unnecessarily, that he was on a spree, and asked the constable to go with him to a public-house. This was done to throw the policeman off his guard; but the best way to do that is to keep out of his way when you *are* out of it, and get out of his way when you are in it. The constable, of course, consented to drink: I never knew one refuse. At drinking and swearing—I don't mean cursing—the police are unmatchable. However, Bob the Gipsy soon began to feel uncomfortable, and, when he had walked a short distance, pulled something out of his pocket, and sai

he would not go any further. This was Bob's last happy moment. The constable was afraid of him, for both Bowrings had spoken of pistols; so he took to coaxing, and Bob was cajoled into accompanying him to the Somerset public-house at Taibach. In walked the constable. Not so Bob: he fairly turned tail, and ran away. The constable was on his heels, and came up to him in the middle of the village. "Stand back," says Bob, "or I 'll shoot you." I don't know why he didn't, except that he hadn't a pistol. The Welshman instantly closed, struck Bob's arm with his staff, and sent him staggering back against a wall.

It was all over with Bob. These half-bred men never show pluck at the last. Wright, another policeman, came up and collared him; then the Welshman got over the wall, and found on the other side ten pounds in silver, and poor Gipsy Bob was transported. His end was not a pleasant one. He tried to escape from off Norfolk Island, across a narrow isthmus that used to be guarded by twenty large fierce mastiffs. He boasted of a secret for pacifying all dogs; but it was of no service to him on this occasion. They tore poor Bob to pieces, and, what is worse, they ate him.

It was many years afterwards that I heard his story; but as soon as he was sentenced, and I knew he had no mother, or wife, or woman to leave his money to, I dug it up out of the wood myself, and added it to a little stock that I always kept ready to give up when called for. Honour, my friend, honour among thieves!

CHAPTER XX.

HOW WE ROBBED THE BANK OF ENGLAND.

"What is a pound?"

SIR ROBERT PEEL.

ALL the numbers of the notes were known. There was not above £170; but that was too much to lose. One good point was that they were Bank-of-England notes, and therefore no tricks could be played in altering them, as country bankers sometimes do, to cheat us thieves of our hard-earned gains. In fact, they never but once got the better of me, and that was when I had got the key of the safe at Rogers's—how I do not choose to say, nor who stood in with me. We got away clear with £43,415 in bank notes, and £1200 in gold, besides a lot of bills. The gold we stuffed in a mattress, and one of us slept on it for more than a year. A precious hard bed it was, too, I can assure you. However, the bankers, acting on the advice of old Wire and young Ashurst, were too quick for us. They lost no time in hallooing, but sent off at

once to all the foreign money-changers notice of the names and numbers, as also did the Bank of England; and then the Bank of England re-issued the notes to Rogers, which indemnified him, and so our game on the continent was stopped. We tried Sweden, Russia, and Germany to no purpose. Everywhere the numbers were stuck up, and even the Dutch Jews would not touch our securities. All away from New York to New Orleans, and round the Horn, and through Mexico, Barings had beaten us; and in China, and even Singapore and the Moluccas—all India, in fact—Hope had forestalled us.

We kept the notes and the bills six years; and at last, in September, 1843, we returned them for £2600, to which the reward of £3000 had been reduced. Indeed, the bankers gave us to understand that if we did not come to an arrangement at once, the reward would be still further diminished at Christmas; so we settled it.

This was some time afterwards, and I only tell the story here by way of illustration.

At present I had got £150 in notes, and did not intend to be done; so I handed them over to a Dutch Jew, and we resolved to "square it" between us.

His agent presented the hundred-pound note at the Bank, when it was refused payment, and they wanted to stop it; but he held it tight, and went with the officer to the Lord Mayor to explain how it came into his possession. The Lord Mayor said he had a right to keep it, as he had received it abroad, and had given

value for it; such was the law, and the Bank ought to pay it; he was an innocent holder—innocent! save the mark!—of a note of acceptance by the Bank of England payable on demand, and it ought to have been paid on demand. Whereupon over goes my gentleman to the Bank, and demands payment in gold for his note, which was, of course, refused. He clamoured loudly, and was ordered out, but refused to go. At last he took out a large printed placard from his pocket, on which could be read,—

"THE BANK OF ENGLAND HAS STOPPED PAYMENT."

This he declared his determination to stick up in the Royal Exchange. The bill was taken in to the governor, and, in three minutes afterwards, the note was paid in due form.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE SILVER ROBBERY.

"Happy the man who, free from care and strife,
In silken or in leathern purse retains
A Splendid Shilling."

PHILLIPS.

THERE were certain skin salesmen who made a practice of attending every Monday morning at the New Cattle Market for the purpose of meeting their customers, and to change their silver for notes or gold. We took care to watch this process, and saw that the money was collected together and placed in various bags—one hundred pounds in each bag. When the silver was got together in six bags it was then tied up in one, and I saw it placed in a cab for the purpose of being taken to the Bank of England.

Now, I am no friend to the Bank of England, and did not quite see why I should not have it myself; so I arranged with the clerk, who became my confederate (and was afterwards transported out of the way for his pains), that I should drive a cab next Monday morning, and be in the way to be called to convey the money. Nothing could be more simple. The clerk brought the cash down from the pay-room, and placed it in my cab,

and got into the cab with it. Then we stopped and had something to drink, and somebody with a chaise cart joined us; and then we went to another public-house, and I brought out a pail of water, and threw some over my horse's legs, and handed it to the young clerk to take back. So he did, and we cleared the cab of the money; then I lighted a pipe, and had a drop at the bar; and he saw the silver all gone, and trembled like a leaf; and I told him to say he had been robbed, and he did so. The police looked into it, but nothing came of it. We bagged £787 by the job; but the clerk took to betting, and taking cash from the counter, and forging names, and so finished his career across the water.

I did better, for I went down with an old friend who had been butler to a gentleman named Braddon, of Blacklands House, in Devonshire, and we did a neat job; but Boghurst, my friend, behaved badly, for he got tipsy, and struck his old master when he got into his bedroom, so that we were obliged to make our escape; and the old butler was caught, for his master recovered and identified him, and he was sent off to Norfolk Island direct.

The next excursion I made was in company with a fellow who put me up to a good thing at the Earl of Suffolk's, at Charlton Park, Wiltshire. He had been house steward there, or something of the sort; and I went down to Swindon with him, whence we walked along the line to Minety. We had a pleasant moon-

light ramble through the old woods and through the coverts, where the fern smelt sweet and fresh, rousing many a cock-pheasant as we pushed our way along. When we got to the Hall it looked so quiet, grand, and solemn, that it seemed almost a shame to disturb its majestic repose; but we had come for business, and business must be done. I could not help being reminded of Charlecote Place, and the universal discredit we had got into, even among our own pals, for robbing what they called "Shakspeare House," where the great dramatist, it seems, had made himself one of us by stealing deer.

However, it was done just like Charlecote, as it happened; for the old servant knew the way of the house, and broke a pane of glass in the picture gallery, and we were in among them at once—out with our knives, and cut the pictures out of their frames. I got a "Virgin and Child," by Leonardo de Vinci, which was well worth £4000 to a National Gallery, but which the dealers wanted to palm off on me as by Andrea Solari; but I was not such a fool.

Well, we bagged a great lot, and got safe away; and I should have made a fortune but for the fool of a fellow with me, who tried to sell the pictures in England, was robbed first by the dealers, and afterwards captured by the police, tried, and transported. As for me, I did well in Holland, and Italy, and Spain, and have some of the paintings in my own gallery to this day.

CHAPTER XXII.

I LEARN MANNERS, AND ROB LORD FOLEY.

"Manners make the man."

Old Proverb.

I HAD now got money; I had got education; but I felt there was something wanting. I could assume the freedom of good fellowship, and felt perfectly self-possessed. I sometimes thought I had the feelings of a gentleman, or their equivalent, in my strict observance of the "honour" that is "among thieves"—an unwritten law we regard as above all others; but I had not the manners of a gentleman, nor the ways of the polite world. I thought too much of serious things, and paid too little attention to trifles; so I advised with myself before beginning a new career, and resolved to learn the manners of the polite world.

How to do this? It was not easy. I could not get among them. Money won't do that. You may be close outside the magic circle of *haut ton* if you have great wealth; but you can't get inside. So I bethought my-

self of the Prince of Wales's motto, *Ich Dien*, "I serve," and determined, therefore, to enter the fashionable world as a footman. I picked out my place and my family, and Grosvenor Square soon saw me as junior footman in Lord Foley's family. I spent a delightful winter; made myself agreeable to all; closely observed the manners and customs of the high-bred; and in the early summer of the year, when the countess left, I went off too, taking with me the plate, which I obtained by securing the under butler's key, and the assistance of some workmen who came to paint and decorate the premises. These are the fellows for little jobs of this character. They are always ready, are never suspected, are all thieves (as regards copper, lead pipes, door handles, door plates, bell wire, and the like unconsidered trifles), and, being most of them family men at good weekly wages, are to be relied upon.

There were three keys to the plate chest, which was kept downstairs, or rather, down the area steps, close to the butler's pantry. Lord Foley had one of these keys, the butler another, and the under butler a third. When the under butler went out he sealed up his key, and gave it to the butler. This packet I got hold of, secured an impression of the key on a piece of yellow soap, and soon formed a fourth one. We carried off four thousand five hundred ounces of plate between us, and with my share I retired finally from the business.

CHAPTER XXIII.

I BECOME RESPECTABLE.

"Who knows?
And yet who knows it not? It is but life
In stronger thread of brighter colours spun,
And spun for ever; dipped by cruel fate
In Stygian dye, how black and brittle here!
How short our correspondence with the sun,
And while it lasts, inglorious!"

YOUNG.

A TIME had now arrived when, the whole nation being seized with a fever of speculation, roguery was the order of the day, and the profession of a thief was swamped in the universal dishonesty. I entered into the speculations of the period with the keen enjoyment of a novice, but the coolness also of a veteran gambler. I had large means to assist the venturous at their first start, and capital to buy them out at the point of success. But I loved most to engage myself where money did most abound, and this I found was not the case in railways, where lawyers, and parliament, an-

landlords "got the pull," but in banks, where quiet people laid down their money for other people to keep for them, who left it lying there for somebody occasionally to pick it up. My grand speculation, therefore, was a Deposit Bank, into which I told the people to pay their money, and not ask me again for it without six months' notice, on which condition I promised—and what is more, I paid—them six per cent. interest. This I could do very well, for I was insured against panic by a half-year's notice, and could invest in reversions, as well as discount at quadruple profits.

All the rest of the world went mad; but I went on quietly, creating confidence and credit—a man's best fortune in life, which, once lost, can never be recovered, and which, in business life, is better than goodness—yea, even than life itself; for it is the breath of a business man's nostrils, and without it he is but like a dead man walking.

Three years of this, with the usual success that attends judicious purchases in a falling market, led to a proper appreciation of my good points; and when at the end I retired from the Deposit Banking business, having sold the concern, at a large premium, to a Company, who still carry it on respectably and profitably, I found no difficulty in obtaining the head clerkship in the house of Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co., with whom, having an eye to such an arrangement in the future, I had always kept a very large floating balance.

I soon became master of their business by becoming

acquainted with their real means, and was thus enabled to time my dealings in the markets, whether of money or produce, with theirs, and so become a sharer in their greatest profits, though at that time not actually a partner.

This position gave me also an insight into some of the very peculiar transactions of the day. When I saw a clerk in an insurance office managing a theatre, and presenting jewels to actresses, I could give a shrewd guess where the funds of the Globe were going, and took care to make acquaintance with young Watts. It was not my fault that such a good little fellow as Ronson did not escape in his dog-cart when he drove the senior clerk over to look for the missing warrants; nor was it through me that the Great Northern found out, too late, that a clerk at £300 a year, who drove to the office in a phaeton and pair, had an opera box, was a patron of the drama and the fine arts, and kept a picture gallery and a couple of singing women, was not exactly the man to have the key of their share books in his pocket, and deal with the untold gold of their dividends. These things will happen, and they did happen, and I made them happen—else why had I—a thief—taken to business?

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW WE ROBBED LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE.

"In his right hand
Long scraps of paper solemnly he waves,
With characters and figures dire inscribed,
Grievous to mortal eyes (ye gods avert
Such plagues from righteous men!)."

PHILLIPS—*The Splendid Shilling.*

IT was about this time that we managed a very clever little affair—nothing less than the robbery of Prince (now Emperor) Napoleon. It came to my knowledge that this royal gentleman was rather short of money, from not having received his remittances from Florence. How few people knew this man as I did! I had watched him for some time past, and knew all his ways, and what he had been about. Alice Grey had let me into a notion or two. I could understand he was the right man, but not yet in the right place, but somehow or other would be sure to get there. At any rate, there was plenty of money in the family, and he was the head of it. Well, I heard he wanted money, and was seeking to get his bills discounted. A certain Mr. Assy, whom he has since been obliged to turn up

a little, though I hear he still sticks to him "like a brick," let out the secret to a friend of mine in Arlington Street, and upon this the plant was made.

We soon found a fellow to do it—a certain Georgey Blothers, a flash publican—and a letter was written.

"(*Private.*)

"CORNHILL, *June 10th*, 1847.

"MR. BLOTHERS presents his respects to the Prince Napoleon, and Mr. B. will do himself the honour of calling upon the Prince to-morrow on private business.

"*Prince Napoleon.*"

On the following day in walks Georgey Blothers, "as big as bull-beef," to Prince Napoleon, at No. 3, King Street, St. James's. He introduced himself as the writer of the letter, and though a perfect stranger, said that, having heard the Prince wished to have some money, he had called to say he had £2000, £3000, or £4000, at his Imperial Highness's disposal, if he wished it.

The Prince was taken aback at such apparent readiness, and said that he was not aware that he should want the money, as he was about to sell out some railway shares. (Credat Judæus—I mean a certain Jew who had got the shares already deposited—and would hardly have trusted him with the sale of them.) "But how did Mr. Blothers know that he, the Prince, wanted money?"

Georgey, as quick as lightning, and as lively as

Garrick, replied that he was a man of business, and that his business was to procure money for noblemen, and that when money was wanted, they always came to him for it.

This was all very plain and straightforward; so the Prince came to the point, and asked what were Georgey's terms.

"Five per cent.," was Georgey's reply, thinking to make sure. He ought, as a prudent man, to have said fifteen, which was the amount his Imperial Highness was then paying. Georgey gave his address—a shy street out of the Strand, with an escape to the river at the bottom—and was told to return on the following Monday, which he did. He produced two blank bills at this first interview, and asked the Prince to write his name on them, but this the Prince declined. Now comes the second interview.

Georgey had a notion of being too clever. He thought he ought to act the usurer; and as he had heard the Gompertzes, and the Olivers, and the Lewises do, he began to talk about money being scarce, and the crisis in the city, and all that palaver; whereupon young Boney, as proud as a thousand Cæsars, and detesting such poor humbug—humbug that has its price in pounds, shillings, and pence, and is not diplomatic humbug or imperial humbug—grew disgusted, and told Georgey in plain terms that if he did not like to finish the business, he, the Prince, did not care about it. Georgey immediately "tumbled" to his true

position, and said he had meant nothing of the kind, that he had not altered his mind, and that he had the two bills in his pocket. These he produced ready drawn.

"£1000. London, June 14th, 1847.

"Two months after date pay to my order one thousand pounds for value received.

"PRINCE LOUIS NAPOLEON BONAPARTE,

"3, *King Street, St. James's Square.*"

There was no drawer's name, but "Accepted" was written across in all readiness. The Prince wrote his name under this, as directed by Georgey, who then completed the document's value by signing "George Blothers" at the bottom. A rare document truly, and one that ought to be kept—if it can be found—with the name of an Emperor at one end, and "George Blothers" at the other! The force of bathos can go no farther.

This done, Georgey took up the bills, and put them in his pocket, and then inquired of the Prince "how he would like to have the money." This is a kind of "treading-water" or "marking-time" movement in bill stealing, to cover the getting off with the bills. It was settled that it was all to be paid in money, and that the bills were not to be parted with. Georgey saw his imperial customer next day, and fobbed him off with a story about the loss he would incur by selling out

consols at a discount, for the funds were falling; so the Prince agreed to wait until the next day.

"The next was the same, and the next, and the next;"

and every day saw the Prince more feverish and impatient. At last he became almost rude and peremptory, and Georgey did not go any more.

Then the Prince communicated with his secretary, Assy, and Assy called in Sussex Street, and did not find Georgey at home; and the Prince and Assy called, and could not find Georgey at home. So they went and told somebody, and somebody told Swanbush and Mullit, and they told a magistrate, and the magistrate told a Grand Jury, and they told a judge, and he told an Old Bailey jury that they must let Georgey Blothers go; for no larceny had been committed, the piece of paper being Georgey's property; for though the Prince had made himself a property in the bills, through rendering them valuable by putting his name to them, yet nevertheless, as Georgey had taken them away with his free consent, under promise to return the money, it was only a breach of contract, or a debt, and that, therefore, they must acquit Georgey. And they did acquit Georgey, and sent a poor wretch, who was tried next, to prison for three years for pawning a shirt, to get the thread to earn sevenpence for a day's work by making another shirt.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE SHAM DETECTIVE.

"Men should be what they seem."

SHAKSPEARE.

ONE afternoon, just as I was about to leave business, Mr. Chester, one of my partners, came in to communicate intelligence of an alarming character. A certain broker, in whom most commercial men placed unbounded confidence, but whom I had myself long suspected, had succeeded in transferring to our house a large amount of Brighton Railway bonds, on the security of which he had obtained £40,000. The bonds were forged. The man had been apprehended, at the instance of my partner, immediately on the discovery; and the securities in our hands were worthless. This was a heavy loss. What was to be done?

Was the forgery proved? Had all our bonds been examined? No; but others had, and those in our possession were certain to be of a similar category. The possessor of the true bonds was an old clergyman

in Cornwall, and had been communicated with by letter that day.

My reply was brief. My partner had done wrong in any such interference. He had consulted me too late. Nothing could now be done. How did he know they were forged? They might not be so. I would take the securities with me, and examine them. I was already engaged to go out of town the next day on important business which could not be postponed. I should return the day after, and make my report, as well as suggest what might best be done. The prisoner, I heard, was remanded until that day. My partners were to answer no inquiries during my absence, but express their willingness, at any loss to themselves, to assist in bringing the offender, if such he were, to condign punishment. Meantime, I also advised that his private resources should be inquired into, and what means he might have available to recompense or cover our losses, in case we should not choose to appear against him. My partner smiled, nodded, and thanked me.

Next minute saw me in a cab. I darted off to my chambers, placed a few articles of dress in a carpet bag —indeed, they always stood ready packed for such emergencies—and in less than half an hour I was flying across the country full speed to a station which united, by a cross line, with the Great Western Railway at Reading. Here I caught an express train five hours in advance of the mail, and that very night, at a late hour,

reached the residence of the Rev. Mr. Polwhele, at Pen-tor, in a remote district of Cornwall.

Luckily the reverend gentleman himself was not at home, but I succeeded in arousing his housekeeper and his wife, to whom I introduced myself as Inspector Swisher, of the London Police. The family—all consisting of females, and all old women—was in terrible alarm, which I pretended to soothe, but which was little mitigated when I mentioned the forgery, and told them that I was commissioned to bring up immediately, without an instant's delay, the lady herself and her husband, with the securities, having first inspected and compared them.

A bombshell falling into a Paddington omnibus at a quarter-past four P.M. from the City could not have produced more alarming confusion. The husband, I learnt, was absent at the Archdeacon's visitation (how I blessed that reverend divine's opportune presence in the diocese!), and he would not return until noon of the next day. What was to be done?

"The warrant of his Lordship," which I affected to produce, but which the lady declared to be entirely unnecessary—for I suspect she thought my showing it would authorise her being taken into custody and handcuffed—"the warrant of his Lordship, the Lord Mayor of London, must be obeyed," I said. "His was a paramount jurisdiction"—I thought this was a good hit—"and even the Prince of Wales, though Duke of Cornwall, could not hesitate to obey it." The lady and t'

bonds must go with me, and the Rev. Mr. Polwhele follow also by the quickest possible train. Ample funds were at their disposal; they would be put to no expenses; and I should leave a ten-pound note (which I did in the shape of sovereigns, for sovereigns cannot be traced) for his passage money. He would find his lady at the Guildhall Coffee House. The housekeeper ought, I suggested, to accompany her mistress; and the box I begged might not go out of their sight.

You must remember that all this was said quietly by a stiff man of brown complexion, buttoned up to the chin in an inspector's uniform, with red hair and slight red whiskers, very broad-chested and thick-legged, but very quick, active, and imperative, though perfectly quiet, calm, and decisive. When he added to what he had said above, that upon their own undelaying promptitude depended whether the whole fortune of the Polwhele family—wife's, sister's, and old aunt's, as well as the reverend rector's own, all invested in Brighton Railway debentures—should be lost and annihilated, or not—the matter was settled, and all indecision (for there never had been doubt) dispelled. There is nothing like showing money.

While the alarmed brace of Cornish hens made their preparations for quitting their dovery (the chaise with four horses waiting at the door), the box containing the bonds for my inspection was brought into the library. I carefully scanned them, appreciated their genuineness at a glance, and compared their numbers with those in

our possession, a minute of which I carried in my pocket. They were fatally identical! I then requested the favour of some sealing-wax to close the box officially, having previously, during the temporary absence of the lady, pocketed what laid on the writing-stand. This she retired to fetch. In that happy minute I tumbled out the bonds, placed them in my bag, and replaced them with the forged securities, which I then sedulously sealed up, in the presence of the lady and her trembling housekeeper, whom I had sent for as an additional witness to complete the formality.

We flew across the country at the extreme speed of four spanking horses, urged by postboys with a promise of sixpence a mile each, relays awaiting us at every spot (a preconcerted arrangement on my part as I passed along), and we caught the mail train, and I came on to London. What became of the two old women I knew not. They might be still riding about, for I blundered them into the carriages of a branch line at Collumpton, or some such outlandish place, and rolled on to London myself, changing my dress in the carriage as we sped along, and getting into another, with a new ticket procured during the usual hasty stoppage at Oxford.

At nine the next morning I entered the bank, and having restored the securities to their usual place of deposit, informed my partner, who attended at ten o'clock to take my duties for the day, and was surprised at my non-absence, as previously arranged, that I had

thought it advisable to see to those securities first, and afterwards proceed on my journey.

We had them out, and looked them over, I expressing a strong doubt as to the forgery.

"Good heavens! Mr. Horsleydown, you can't mean that," said my astounded partner.

"Indeed I do, Mr. Chester," I replied; "and I propose that we take any one of them—but only one—jump into a cab at once, and go over London Bridge to the office."

This was done; and, as I expected, and well knew, the bond produced proved to be genuine.

What was now to be done with the broker?

"Leave that to me," I replied to my anxious partner, who now began to see a lawsuit and heavy damages looming in the prospect.

The interview was a short one. I found the man in despair; but swearing him to secrecy—not that I cared for his oath, seeing that his breaking it would have been equal to a sentence of transportation for himself—I told him to plead his innocence, stand to it firmly, and go through a trial, assuring him that, on certain conditions, he should be honourably acquitted. There were certain other conditions annexed to this, which were to my own personal advantage. One was an acquittance to the house—on his release—from all further claim on the bonds, as well as for any damages, I undertaking to insure his coming off with honour. The result was, that this man became my faithful slave,

and acted as my own broker in several of my largest transactions of a particularly private character, that required secrecy the most profound, as you can very well understand.

On the third morning came the Rev. Mr. Polwhele, very short, very stout, very asthmatic, very red, and very fussy. I soon cooled him down and quieted his fears. He then told a very piteous tale—how the two disconsolate women had been spirited away, with the bonds in a box, half over Cornwall, and right across Devonshire and Dorsetshire; how they had finally, after two days of sleepless and perpetual travelling by various railways, reached the Guildhall Coffee House, and delivered themselves into the custody of the landlord, whom they regarded as a very important official, assuring him that it was accident only that had delayed their immediate arrival and surrender on the previous morning. "Where was Inspector Swisher?" inquired the two elderly doves, anxious to take refuge under his protecting epaulets.

The landlord remonstrated, and the ladies explained; in such a manner that it took a whole afternoon to find out their meaning. Inspector Swisher was summoned; but that acute officer could not come: he had that very morning gone off (at my request) to Norway, after a banking baronet who had swindled all the depositors in an old family bank, and converted the whole of the securities of his customers to his own use.

This was unlucky certainly. So their story remained

untold and uncontradicted. The trial intervened before Swisher returned.

Our counsel urged the forgery, and proceeded to prove it—he knew no better—by the original bonds in the Rev. Mr. Polwhele's possession. The seals were opened, and the bonds produced. The counsel for the defence (who did know what he was about) asked to look at one of them, and also one of those in our possession. Then, placing his glasses on his learned nose, he compared them; then, having marked both of them differently, and handing them to his lordship the judge, he took back one of them, turned to the railway official, and handed it to him.

"Is that a forgery?"

"No."

"Is *that* a forgery?" handing the other.

"Yes."

"My lord, I submit my client must be acquitted. The forged bond is from the box of the Rev. Mr. Polwhele; the genuine bond is that which is alleged to be forged."

The Court was astounded. The spectators in the gallery drew a long breath, as if relieved. The jury whispered together; the prisoner, who had hitherto been firm, turned pale, trembled, and fainted. He soon rallied, and the trial proceeded. The contents of the Rev. Mr. Polwhele's box were all found to be forgeries; those in the possession of Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co., were all sworn to be genuine.

A verdict of acquittal followed, as a matter of course.

The judge addressed the broker in a strain of honest indignation, as a grossly calumniated and persecuted man. My partner, who was present, acting by my advice, expressed his regret, and offered every apology and compensation.

The acquitted gentleman, spreading out his manly chest, declined any such condonation. He stood upon his character as above all price.

They both shook hands—the banker and the broker, the accuser and the acquitted. The scene was very affecting—the spectators in tears, the judge in much emotion, the jury in the greatest excitement. Only the Rev. Mr. Polwhele, who wanted to say something and ask a question, was troubled. He was snubbed; he was almost hooted out of court—no one knew why; only they wanted to kick somebody, and he appeared not to share in the universal sympathy with the accused.

I had taken care that the ten sovereigns I left behind in Cornwall for the reverend gentleman's fare to London should be counterfeit coin—a circumstance which, as I had calculated, cost him no small trouble and personal inconvenience. He soon had something else to occupy his attention for some time to come, besides the loss of his bonds, for he was apprehended, immediately after the trial, at an out-of-the-way country town on his way home; and what with the discredit of the forgery and the confusion of the old ladies, who had also passed five bad sovereigns at the Guildhall

Coffee House, which could not at first be traced to them, but were brought home to them on the arrest of their brother—it would have gone hard with that reverend gentleman, who would assuredly have been transported (sentence was passed on his sisters in accordance with the verdict of a London jury), but that his trial took place in the Western Circuit, and the lord-lieutenant of his own county gave evidence to the unblemished character of the good old rector during half a century.

Swisher came home, and then the story was blown; but as I had purposely taken away with me a silver inkstand which stood upon the table, as well as passed off the counterfeit sovereigns, it was set down as the clever *ruse* of some London thief, who happened to hear the case at the Mansion House while watching the fate of some "pal;" and having caught the name and residence of the Rev. Mr. Polwhele, had robbed him in due course. This notion was the more strongly corroborated by the fact that, on the occasion of the family's absence, from the complicated troubles and vexations consequent on the two arrests, the three trials, the two acquittals, the one sentence, and the subsequent inquiry, their house at Pen-tor was entered, and everything of value carried off.

With this, however, I had nothing to do: it was only a lucky accident. The tide of fortune—if there be such a thing—was running, at that time, high in my favour.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE GREAT HOTEL ROBBERY.

"The great secret of life is never to be in the way of others."
HALIBURTON.

My business was not always of a strictly commercial character. I occasionally transacted affairs at the West End of London, and one of the scenes that took place on an occasion of this kind was of so extraordinary a character, and had results so remarkable that it is worth while entering it in my Book of Confessions.

It was late in the season when there dashed up to the door of the Villiers Hotel, in Arlington Street, one evening, a neat travelling chariot with four foaming horses. The groom-porter, and the attendants were quickly at the door, and assisted in the disembarkation of a tall elderly gentleman of distinguished appearance, with grey hair floating over his shoulders, who desired instantly to be shown to an apartment, first of all carefully looking after a blue despatch box, which he placed under his arm and carried upstairs himself, declining the assistance of any servant in doing so.

To the proprietor, who lost no time in presenting himself before a guest apparently so distinguished, and with such a quantity of luggage—for the carriage was loaded inside and out—the stranger gave his address as the Hon. John Holman, Senior Secretary to the United States Embassy; but requested that his name might not be further mentioned, as, from political reasons, he did not wish his arrival known until the next day. There were circumstances at the moment of a peculiar nature in the relations between Great Britain and the United States, and, according to the best newspaper authorities, a war was imminent. Those who understood such matters knew better; but there was quite enough feeling abroad to render such an intimation, on the part of a high official, perfectly intelligible as well as reasonable; especially when this gentleman hinted that he had taken the precaution of travelling post by the last three stages, for the purpose of avoiding any announcement of his arrival in the public papers until the object of his special mission was accomplished.

An assurance to the desired effect having been given, the Secretary directed a huge leather trunk containing papers to be brought up into his room, and then proceeded to engage a large suite of apartments, with several bedrooms for the other gentlemen accompanying him. These he settled to take for a week; but said that, for his own part, he should only remain over the next day, and that four horses were to be engaged, and his carriage to be in readiness, at the door, for his departure

en route for the Continent, at five o'clock precisely on the succeeding morning after the next day intervening.

He then further said that, as he should be completely occupied with business until the very moment of his departure, it was his wish that the proprietor should at once oblige him with his account for charges up to that time, and also for the apartments engaged for the week, which, it depended on circumstances, might or might not be occupied, his desire being to remain there quite undisturbed, and to leave without parade of any kind, with as little notice as possible, and seeing as few of the attendants, or being seen. If this were arranged, he would at once discharge the account.

A moment's calculation enabled the host to state a satisfactory amount, which the Secretary immediately paid from a large bag containing sovereigns that he took out of the trunk, adding to it a liberal donation for the servants.

"By the by," said he, "Mr. Leman, I shall have a gentleman of distinction call upon me late this evening —I should rather say towards the morning—at an hour when I presume your house will be closed. It is requisite that he should not be seen—you can readily comprehend why. Have you any objection to my admitting him, myself, alone?"

"None whatever, sir; I shall be happy to accommodate you; but to do this it will be requisite that I should myself show you how to open the door."

"The house is, of course, lighted all night?"

"The corridors are always lighted, sir."

"Right. Will you be good enough now to show me the different rooms selected for my suite?"

"You have your own apartments entirely on this floor, sir; the others are above. I will precede you, sir."

So saying, with wax candles in hand, he advanced before his guest, who followed him at a dignified pace, noting each object as he went along. The several rooms were duly pointed out and entered. As they passed a magnificent beaufet in the second corridor, the stranger stopped to admire it, and asked its purpose.

"We keep our plate here, sir," said the host, somewhat proudly. "We have the handsomest services of modern and antique plate of any establishment in the country. Would you like to see them?"

"With pleasure," said the secretary graciously; "but few things of such a nature can surprise me. I have seen most of the rarest and most splendid services in the various courts of Europe; and, though a plain people in our representatives and diplomacy, we have some luxuries of the artistic kind among us, I can assure you."

Mr. Leman threw open the doors of his beaufet, the Secretary remarking to him that the lock was in itself a curiosity.

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Leman, "Bramah made that for me himself; it defies all art in picking it."

"What! even Hobbs himself?" asked the Secretary, smiling.

"I should not be afraid of him, saving your presence, sir," said Mr. Leman, with some vanity.

"Well, I don't suppose he will have an opportunity of trying," said the Secretary good-humouredly; "but really, Mr. Leman, your collection of plate is not only rich, but rare and curious to an extraordinary degree."

"It ought to be so," said Mr. Leman, with pardonable vanity. "It is the picking of every cabinet that has been in the market for the last century. My great-grandfather began the collection, my grandfather and father continued it, and I have been tolerably successful myself. There is scarcely an ounce of gold or silver in the whole that is not worth four times its weight for workmanship and *vertu!*"

"Indeed!" said the Secretary, "I can well believe it; but I must not lose time. Let us proceed."

Mr. Leman closed the cabinet, locked it, and was about to replace the key in his pocket. The Secretary observed that it was a golden one, of an exceedingly diminutive size, and wished to inspect it. Mr. Leman placed it in his hand, which he closed upon it, with the remark that it could be grasped without being seen. He then held it up to the light, inspected it, and returned it.

Just at this moment there swept down the corridor a vision of beauty such as the eye of the unprivileged seldom falls upon. A lady not quite young, but of age just sufficient to impart mellowness and dignity to her beauty, passed by, magnificently arrayed in an evening

toilette, which fully displayed her charms and graces. She was attended by a maid, carrying her shawl.

The stranger bowed low as he stood aside to make room for her amply-waving robes, that rustled with luxurious sound as she stepped proudly past, diffusing around her the perfume of delicious odours—a moving atmosphere of light and flower! The lady acknowledged the courtesy with a slight inclination of her noble head, and a gentle flush on her peach-like cheeks.

"What a glorious woman!" said the Secretary, half to himself.

"The pride of our English court, sir. That lady is the Hon. Mrs. Clavers, the daughter of our Secretary for Home Affairs. She is one of the richest heiresses in the kingdom—a noble lady, sir, and renowned everywhere for goodness and charity. I wish she was as happy as she is good."

"Ah!" said the Secretary, "it is not always so in this world; but what is the matter there?"

"Oh! the old story, sir. Rank and wealth with us, in this old country, often bring with them much misery. Her husband leads her a wretched life. But I ought not to say this; for if she were more happy at home she would not be so good a customer to me. She always stops here on her way from her husband's seat in Shropshire to her father's castle in Suffolk, and spends much of her time in travelling between them. She will be a Countess some of these days. I hope she may be happier then."

"No children, I suppose?" said the stranger, leaning pensively with his back against the beaufet, and his hands behind him.

"None, sir, though I did hear there are hopes; but these are delicate matters we know little about. Perhaps that would make her more comfortable."

"No doubt," said the Secretary, rising from his leaning position, and stepping forward. "Have you any outside courtyard here, that one might walk in, a few paces, up and down, in the open air?"

"Yes, sir, below;" and he led the way to the back of the house, which opened on to a wide back street. A light shone in a room above. "That is the Hon. Mrs. Clavers's sleeping apartment," said he. "She always chooses this, in preference to any other, for light and air, though I should wish her to have selected one higher up in the house, for we consider it a great charge when she is on the premises. I have often made her laugh by telling her so."

"What do you mean?" inquired the stranger. "What risk can she bring, or you incur, by her presence? Surely her station is sufficient protection from any outrage; nor would any person, however closely related, or by whatever right, venture upon it in your house."

"You mistake me, sir," said Mr. Leman. "I allude to the extreme value of the diamonds she always carries with her. They are the old family jewels—the dowry of a princess."

"Oh, indeed!" remarked the Secretary. "Now y-

say this, I don't consider that window remarkably safe from the street or this yard."

"Exactly my opinion, sir. I wished to put some bars up there, but she emphatically and distinctly forbade my doing so."

"And now," said the Secretary, "I will trouble you to show me the entrance door."

This was done, and in a few minutes the stranger retired to his room, the supper he had ordered being served.

This was soon despatched and removed. The servant retired, and the door was closed. Then the Secretary slipped the lock quietly, and I, Jack Horsleydown, gravely took off my long grey wig, and laid it on the table beside me.

"Not so bad this," I exclaimed, as I opened the blue despatch box, and took from it, not a protocol about the Honduras or the San Juan Channel, but a neatly-constructed *jemmy* of polished steel, and as handsome a set of housebreaking tools as ever gladdened the eyes of the wealthiest and cleverest of crackmen.

Taking up a piece of wire, and comparing it with a wax impression of the key and lock of the beaufet, which I had secured in the course of my conversation with my host, I soon worked out the problem of the Bramah lock, on which Mr. Leman relied so confidently. Once knowing the catch, a twist here and there of the wire speedily elaborated all difficulty.

But the jewels!

How eagerly I watched the sound of returning wheels, until I knew that the Hon. Mrs. Clavers had come in and retired! How carefully I observed the breaking up of two or three parties who sat late at dinner! But the hour of three arrived, and all was still.

Throwing on my dressing-gown and a pair of tight-fitting pumps with cork soles, looking like slippers, and always kept by me for such occasions, I proceeded downstairs. The corridors were all lighted, as I expected; the door was left on latch, as I anticipated; but I turned into the back yard, and speedily, like a cat, mounted to the window of the Hon. Mrs. Clavers's bedroom. The curtains were drawn, but I could see, through the opening between them, that a light was burning; and, on looking towards the bed—could I believe my eyes? Could that young gentleman with the incipient moustache and high aristocratic forehead, half concealed with clustering curls, then engaged in fond endearments with the lovely lady,—could he—be the cruel husband of whose unkindness I had so recently heard? What was to be done? There was not a moment to lose.

A sudden loud rapping at the door alarmed both me and the loving pair. It was the voice of the police, and rang round the street. A sudden flash on the other side of the wall showed that I had been observed. I saw the lady rise, madly alarmed, from the bed, all beauteously disarrayed as she was, and push her lover (for such he was) from the side of the bed on which he

had been sitting, and hurry him into a large wardrobe, of which she turned the key.

"So, so," thought I, "you are saved, Jack Horsley-down."

I lifted the window through which the venturous swain had evidently found his way to a preconcerted interview, and softly slipped into the room. She was about to scream. I put my hand gently to her mouth.

"Not a word, madam, or you are lost for ever! I come only to save you."

"For Heaven's sake what do you mean?" she murmured, "There is no one here."

"Not that you know of, madam," whispered I; "but some one is within this wardrobe, and the key is turned *outside*."

"Oh, spare me!" she exclaimed, in a low hoarse voice. "Spare me, and save him!"

"Both, madam," said I, "if you are silent and discreet. "As for you, sir," I went on, as I unlocked the wardrobe, and a very handsome young fellow stepped out of it, "do exactly as I tell you, and all will be well."

He pressed my hand in silence, then whispered,—

"Never mind me; but, whoever and whatever you are, save her."

"First let us put out this tell-tale light," I gently said, suiting the action to the word, after he had taken up his hat, "and do you, madam, return into your bed."

By this time the fast-coming steps of two men were

heard sounding up the corridor: the regularity of the tread of one, though hurried, marked the policeman; the other we soon found to be the proprietor of the hotel.

They came close up to the door.

"There is no light in the room," said the landlord.

"But there *was*," said the policeman.

The landlord knocked—once—twice!

"Answer as if you were awaking," I whispered to the lady.

She did, and inquired what was the matter.

They told her they had seen some one get over the wall and into her room.

"Scream," whispered I. She did so—a little scream of fright. "Get up and go to the door."

She obeyed, and told them, as I prompted her, that it was impossible. She had only just put her light out and dropped off to sleep.

Still the policeman persisted.

She then asked them—I still prompting—to go away for a few minutes and examine the yard and the other rooms while she dressed herself. She was not afraid, she said, for she knew she was quite safe, and no one in her room.

This she said coolly and confidently. Oh, those women! Their courage and presence of mind in extremity are a continuous marvel.

The steps retired. I listened for an instant.

"Now, then," said I to the young gentleman (for such he plainly was, and of a very high order), "you must

out, pass quickly downstairs to the hall, turning to the right to get there. You will find the door on the latch. Turn to the right again, cough twice, and a cab will drive rapidly up to you; say to the driver, 'All wrong;' jump in, and away——"

"Stop," said he; "do you know me?"

"Yes, my lord," said I, at a guess; "but you had better give me your card in case of accident. I shall know how to use it."

He passed a card into my hand.

"If you are stopped, my lord, talk a little, and I shall be with you, and will extricate you at any risk. Now, off!"

He opened the door, I retiring back to the dressing-table, whence, after he had closed it, I secured a jewel box, of which I had taken note, and, during the darkness, placed it in the pocket of my dressing-jacket.

"Now then, madam," said I, "do you not come out for a few minutes, and then only to your own door, after ringing your bell violently, but not for two minutes yet. Look at your watch" (here I lighted the candle, keeping my shadow from the blind), "and mark the time well. Don't be hurried, and fear nothing."

I then slipped out of the room, went half way up the staircase, and came down again, looking at the card as I did so, for I heard the whole house stirring. I read upon it,—

THE EARL OF DALTON,
2ND LIFE GUARDS.

Here was a pretty tale for the morning papers! I approached the hall, where I heard voices in rather loud altercation. What a scene was that! There was the landlord staring with his mouth open, and Sergeant Jobson, of the A Division, a man not to be bamboozled, sturdily standing with his back against the door. The nobleman was remonstrating, and held his hand up, as if about to collar the policeman.

I stepped forward.

"What is this, sir?" said I, addressing Mr. Leman, whom I took aside. "Did I not tell you my friend would pass in and out? Why is this man in livery here?" (I pretended not to know a policeman—I!) "You told me no one should be here."

"What, sir, is this your friend? Oh, pray excuse us. This is a policeman, sir."

"A policeman!" I exclaimed indignantly. "What for, pray? Why this outrage?"

"Oh, sir, some one was seen to come into the house, and we thought some thief——"

"Stop," said I, taking the landlord aside; "this is a ridiculous, and may be a very mischievous mistake. This gentleman is the Earl of Dalton."

"Yes, sir, I recognised him, and am so sorry; but the lady, sir?"

"What lady?" I inquired, as if with curiosity.

Mr. Leman stammered. At this moment a bell rang violently. Mr. Leman put the sergeant aside, whispered, "A mistake—a great mistake," and the young noble-

man stepped boldly out, looking defiance around as he did so. Never shall I forget his pale and angry, yet despairing countenance in that hall, and the relief that passed over it, as he put his foot on the outer doorstep.

Mr. Leman hastened upstairs, where, surrounded by female servants and in high hysterics, he saw the Hon. Mrs. Clavers.

I followed him, having first slipped a couple of sovereigns into the hand of the bewildered and mystified Sergeant Jobson, who retired thankful and well satisfied with his night's work, but muttering still,—

"I will swear I saw some one go in at that window."

The lady was soon pacified, especially when she saw me walk quietly past the door of her room towards my own apartments.

Next day I spent tranquilly with my papers; but I had three visitors. The first was the proprietor, Mr. Leman, to excuse himself and blame the over-zeal of the sergeant of police, begging me to be silent on the subject, as it might be the ruin of his house. Indeed, the Hon. Mrs. Clavers was already preparing to leave, and persisted in regarding herself as grossly insulted; so much so that she had resolved never to enter the house again.

The second visitor was the young Life Guardsman, whose gratitude seemed beyond all expression. I spoke to him like a father; but very briefly; and strongly advised him not to see the lady, if possible, any more; but if he must—certainly not for a few

days—at any rate, not while resident in that hotel. He promised me on his honour not to visit or communicate with her for two days at any rate, and went away grateful and light-hearted to a water frolic at Richmond, thence to pull up the river to Oxford. So I knew he was safe, for that day and night, at least.

The third visitor, towards the evening, was the Hon. Mrs. Clavers. I received her with much deferential courtesy, and requested her to be seated, but she declined.

"Sir," said she, "I am indebted to you beyond all power of expression. My life and honour—the safety of one dearer to me than myself and all the world—I owe to you. How you came there at the moment I must not—may not—dare not—ask. I shall ever be ready to show my gratitude, and I may be useful. You are, I hear, a great diplomatist. Am I mistaken in recognising the name of the Hon. John Holman, to whom all the world owe so much?"

I bowed.

"Then, sir," she went on, "I may be able to serve you. It is easy to understand the cause of your presence here. My father——" Here she put her handkerchief to her eyes, and broke forth passionately with,—"But how dare I speak of the father whom I dishonour? Oh! sir, if you knew my story—my undeserved sufferings, my trials, my wounded pride, my many mortifications, my struggles against temptation—you would indeed pity me."

I never saw such a fine piece of acting in my life; yet I have been for many years an ardent patron of the drama.

Of course I sympathised and soothed her, leading her to think what she wished me to believe, or at any rate to say, in spite of my eyes, that she was an injured and an innocent woman. Of course I said so. One I knew she was; the other did not matter to me.

"But, sir," said she, turning upon me a sudden, quick glance as she started the subject—"but, sir," she went on, "there is another mystery," and here she came close up to my ear, and whispered hoarsely yet distinctly, half shuddering as she did so; "there has been, or there *is*, a real thief in the house."

Bold as I am, and steady as are my nerves, I felt a spasm at my heart. Was I, then, in this woman's power, not she in mine? Could this be possible?

She went on, noting the slight tremor of the muscles round my mouth:—

"Don't laugh, sir, I beg of you. Indeed, it is no laughing matter: I have been robbed, last night, of my jewels."

The point she put into this last sentence was equal to anything Miss O'Neil, or Miss Ellen Tree, or poor Miss Huddart ever uttered.

"Is it possible, madam?" I exclaimed. "Were they valuable?"

"My jewels, sir," said this she-devil, "are worth £180,000."

I drew a long breath. I had, then, at last made my fortune. I could now retire. There was ample market abroad for precious stones, and no questions asked. My time had come—my triumph! I could marry, rear children, retire from business, and live honestly.

The serpent was winding her glittering folds around me, while I stood unconscious, dreaming, with sensuous delight, in a fool's paradise.

"What would you advise me to do, sir?" she said in a soft voice, half leaning towards me as she did so.

I can believe, now, how Adam fell, though present heaven and all its happiness were waiting on his refusal.

"The situation is difficult," I replied.

"And critical, I must confess," she added.

"Were I you, madam, I should be silent. Not all the wealth in the world, and all the jewels that ever glittered in Golconda's fabled mines, could repay you for the loss of——".

"What you have found, I suppose, sir," rejoined she, with a light laugh that struck terror to my soul: 'twas like the snake's eye, that dazzles before he strikes! "If so, what am I to do for the want of my jewels? How appear at court? What excuse offer to my father?"

"Madam, there are substitutes—imitations closely resembling the originals—so closely as to defy the detection of any connoisseurs but those who actually handle them, which no one can doubt when they are

worn by a lady of your rank. Have them made false, madam."

"Exactly so, sir; that is what I always do when I travel. Those stolen from me last night were false."

I half started back. With that she made me a low courtesy, and was about to retire.

"Stop, madam," said I, recovering myself immediately; "one word more."

"Oh, sir, it is needless; you may depend on me!"

"Devil!" thought I. "*Depend* on you, madam?" I said. "What does this mean? Are you aware of our relative positions?"

"Quite, sir," she replied. "I know too well I am entirely in your power. Excuse me if I shake my chains a trifle or so now and then. Again I say to you, depend on me!"

And with that she withdrew, keeping her dazzling eyes fixed on me, as in majestic beauty she swept, proudly and defiantly, from the room.

I bowed low as she closed the door, and was relieved by her absence. I, Jack Horsleydown, was beaten by a woman!

I flew to my despatch box, and examined the jewels. She had spoken truly; they were all false as herself—as worthless, yet as beautiful to the eye, and as pleasing.

A few minutes afterwards her travelling carriage was at the door, and she left the hotel in the highest state of indignant virtue, attended with every one's commiseration and sympathy.

In the course of the afternoon I sent for the landlord, and telling him I was about to leave the house next morning at five o'clock precisely, communicated to him the pleasing fact that my mission was accomplished, that the British government had given up the occupation of the island of Ruatan, and the United States had guaranteed the neutrality of the Panama passage, between the Atlantic and Pacific, co-ordinately with the three great Naval Powers of Europe.

I had the pleasure of reading this in the evening papers—in a "second edition" bawled on both sides of the way that same night—and chuckled at the profit that would accrue to me, next day, from the contradiction.

"At five o'clock in the morning precisely the Senior Secretary to the United States Embassy left the Villiers Hotel, Arlington Street, *en route* for New York, in a carriage with four horses. The Hon. John Holman travelled entirely alone, being engaged on a special mission." So said *The Morning Post.*

At nine o'clock precisely the same morning Mr. John Horsleydown took his usual seat in the bank parlour of Messrs. Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co., and, proceeded, deliberately, after opening his letters—the accumulation of two days' absence on a tour for his health—to make arrangements for the day's business, one portion of which was "bearing" the funds to a considerable extent against the news of a peaceful arrangement with the United States.

That same morning, at about half-past nine, the

éclaircissement in the Villiers Hotel, Arlington Street, was something extraordinary. The house had been robbed; five bedrooms had been entered without disturbing their slumbering inmates; watches, jewellery, cash, and notes, to the extent of £6000, had been abstracted; and the whole of Mr. Leman's rare collection of curious and antique plate had been carried off.

Singularly enough, after the first bruit of the discovery, little more was said about it. Even the police were called off the track, and Sergeant Jobson, A Division, was advised to hold his tongue if he hoped for promotion. Mr. Leman agreed, however, with him, that the thief they suspected must have remained concealed in the house the night previous; though, at the same time, he totally forgot to make any allusion to the very important corroborative fact of a large quantity of bricks and old newspapers—about equivalent in weight to the plate and other valuables abstracted—having been left behind by the American Secretary, though packed with singular care under his excellency's bed.

As for me, I nearly recovered my losses—I mean as respected the jewels—that very day. The extent to which I "beared"—that is, bought stock for a fall against the market for a rise—was so enormous, and apparently outrageous, that my partners came up and asked security against the risk. This I immediately gave by depositing the jewels in question, and we cleared close upon a quarter of a million between us.

They followed my advice; and when stock went down, in two days afterwards, "bulled" the market—that is, bought for the rise against the falling market—to half the same amount. This time the *ruse* succeeded. It singularly happened that exactly the arrangement I had "fudged" was made by the two governments. Up went the funds; we divided another hundred thousand pounds, and my jewels were released; but I left them still for safety, as "valuable securities," in our iron safe. They added weight and consequence to the "private account" of Mr. John Horsleydown with Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co.

CHAPTER XXVII.

HOW I GOT THE JEWELS.

"Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of El Dorado.

But he grew old,
This knight so bold,
And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell, as he found
No spot of ground,
That looked like El Dorado."

EDGAR A. POE.

TIME rolled on, but I never forgot the lady or the jewels; and to make sure of both, kept my eye on the young earl in the 2nd Life Guards. It was three years before I finally ran him to earth, and he went the pace briskly during that period. He never caught sight of me again, but he was never out of my view. My agents lent him money on his own and his

friends' names—for these young fellows hook in one another perpetually; so much so that a regiment at Hounslow has been known to "change Jews" with a regiment at St. George's, and both of them begin again afresh with a new score. Talk of the dishonesty of discounters! Commend me to the honesty of an honourable young gentleman fresh from college, or after a couple of years in the Hussars. It takes three attorneys and two Jews to match them, I can assure you. Indeed, the only way it has been done effectually, of late years, has been to unite the Jew and the lawyer together; these, with a slight dash of the sheriff's officer, or the three amalgamated—a mixture which has recently been introduced, since "the profession" has been so much improved—can alone cope with the *élite* of our youthful aristocracy. However, I had the young earl closely followed up, and at last we had him in the toils, clapped up safe in Cursed Street, Chancery Lane.

The very next morning our principal partner came into my room and said,—

"I have rather a delicate business for you, Mr. Horsleydown. We don't often have to deal with ladies."

"Heaven be praised!" I replied feelingly. "They are dangerous customers. If they are right they talk too much, and make too much fuss and botheration; if they are wrong they talk more, and it becomes worth while losing money to get rid of them."

He laughed.

"Well," said he, "there's no risk of loss in this transaction. You must know that I have recently, in my private capacity, mainly through Mrs. Vernon's instrumentality" (here he mentioned his wife's name: she was a lady of high birth and great fashion) "made several advances to the Countess of Bathwick, who, for a lady of unquestionable prudence and large fortune, certainly does appear to me to have been laying out—it cannot have been investing—some very large sums lately."

I smiled.

"Why do you smile, Horsleydown? You seem to me to sit here, never to go anywhere, or talk to any one; and yet you know more about the world, great as well as small, than us who are perpetually toiling round in its whirligig."

"I overlook the game, sir, and turn the wheel. There is nothing like a bank parlour for secret histories—political, public, and private. No one can move without money, and all the money is here. The countess you speak of, is she not a very beautiful woman, young, and amiable? and was she not the Hon. Mrs. Clavers? and is she not the daughter of Sir Charles Devreux?"

"Certainly. However, she is possessed of the finest set of diamonds in Europe, and she wants to raise £100,000 upon them."

"They are worth £180,000 at any forced sale."

"How the—— dickens!—did you know that? But never mind. I let her have £2000 last night for some

pressing emergency, and she is to call to-day with the jewels and complete the arrangement. Now, what I want you to do is to see her when she comes, express a wish to look at the jewels, examine them—which I can't pretend to do, as it would seem to be doubting a person I meet in society every day—and then, subsequently, advise further with me on the subject of the advance."

"I am not partial to such negotiations," I observed; "they always lead to disputes, if conducted between principals; but in this instance I will do my best to oblige you."

He thanked me, and shortly after introduced the Countess of Bathwick to my room.

She did not recognise me, as how should she, with my short, dark, stubby hair? I always kept the prison crop for my fashion—it was convenient for disguise. No one ever saw an actor with long hair or whiskers. The singers, to be sure, wear moustaches; but who ever mistook a singer or a fiddler for a cavalry officer?

I received her with a courteous bow, and motioned her to a seat. She was in nowise altered—splendid in beauty as ever—glorious and glowing as a mellow sunset in July; but about her mouth there was a peculiar development of sensuousness and a want of firmness that betokened concealed suffering. You always see that mark in the lost creatures of the sex.

"You have an arrangement to make with our house in regard to some diamonds, my lady," I said in a

measured voice. "Will you permit me to inspect them?"

"I have them here," she said, handing me a jewel box.

I rose and stepped back a few paces from the table, in front of which she was sitting, as if to get a better light from the window; then turning, I opened the door of the safe, in which were our valuable securities, and substituted for this box the one I had brought from the Villiers Hotel in Arlington Street. Then turning sharply round, and fixing my eyes on the countess, I said,—

"Mr. Vernon has advanced you £2000 on these, my lady, and it is proposed that he shall give you £80,000 more upon the security of the contents of this casket?"

"Yes, sir," she said.

"Take them back, my lady," I replied, handing the box to her; "they are false."

"False, sir!" she exclaimed, "false! What mean you? How dare you?—They are worth £180,000."

"That, madam, is false as they are. Look at them."

She opened the box, but saw no difference.

"This, my lady, is not the first time you have had false jewels in your possession."

Something in my tone arrested her attention. She gazed upon me, caught my glance, and recognised it. She would have screamed.

"Forbear, madam," said I; "you would be ruined

for ever. You have fraudulently obtained £2000 of my partner by means of false jewels, and were about to cheat our firm of £80,000 more. It is my turn now, madam. You are now in my house, and you may *depend* on *me*. Pray be seated."

She fell, almost fainting, in a seat.

"I will save you, my lady. I will save *him*."

She started to her feet, her eyeballs staring, her arms extended, her breast heaving with agitation like a rising sea.

"Oh, save me—save him!"

"Be calm, my lady; all will be well yet. What have you done with that £2000?"

"I have it here. I was on my way with it to him at that dismal place."

"You must not go; you would ruin yourself and the child."

She shuddered and knelt. Yes; that proud woman knelt,—weeping,—at my feet—mine, Jack Horsley-down, the thief!—she the daughter of a cabinet minister!

"Rise, madam," I said, "I require no such entreaty. I am doing my duty." (I never think fine words about duty and honour are thrown away; they are like poppy seed, sure to come up, somewhere, with a flaunting colour.) "You wanted that money to release the Earl of Dalton. When you had done that, what next was to be done? Was all this to go on for ever?"

"No, no; he has an appointment for India—Go-

vernor of Madrepore. In six years he would return, wealthy, and I think wiser."

"The £2000 you will give to me." (I confess, hard as I was, and miserly, and roguish, and money-loving, and everything you all call bad—I confess, nevertheless, I was affected—almost moved to tears, in all my iron nature—by the eager confidence with which that woman, who knew I had changed her jewels, placed that £2000 in my hands.) "With this, my lady, I will buy up his debts, adding the rest from my own resources. In half an hour he will be at liberty. You will promise me not to tell him one word of what has passed, and to keep all secret for the future. The jewels will then be mine. You will keep the false set."

"How shall I ever be sufficiently thankful?"

"Thankful!" thought I to myself. "Oh, these unreasoning, unreflecting women!"

I rang my bell, sent for my law agent,—had all the earl's discharges—for there were fifteen detainers at the doors of Cursed Street—duly executed—took care that he had no fees to pay, sent him a hundred sovereigns in gold, and never rested until I knew he was safe on board at Southampton *en route* for Ceylon.

But I had secured the jewels. It was some years before I and that lady met again.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE DETECTION.

"And as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow.
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be,
This land of El Dorado?'

"'Over the mountains
Of the moon,
Down the vale of shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,
'If you seek for El Dorado.'"

EDGAR A. POE.

I BEGAN now to reckon up my gains, and found they amounted to nearly half a million!—yes, £500,000! —all of it the produce of right-down, honest, pure, simple, and deliberate thievery! I had no one to thank for it—had earned it all myself, by courage, acuteness, hard work, and great personal risk. The injury I had done to others was but a trifle in comparison with the

wrong and the cruelty that ordinarily accompany the amassing of an equal amount by the great capitalist, whether money-broker, dealer in produce, or manufacturer. What I had taken was from the rich—the nobleman's useless plate, a trouble to him and an expense; the high-bred wanton's jewels; the contractor's "turn of the market;" the stockbroker's contango; the swindling director's reserved shares; the noble "stag's allotment," the pompous pretender's, sham securities; the banker's false credit; the useless capital of the money-monger.

My moneys were safe in uncome-at-able foreign investments, worked through Jewish foreign houses —true thieves themselves, and therefore such as a thief can trust. My securities were in my private solicitor's hands, who, being allowed his share of the plunder in the shape of fees, cared little for anything but the care of his own and my interests; while my diamonds, the jewels of my eye, were snug in a confidential deposit, which you will excuse me if I do not mention.

I had begun to think that I had realised sufficient means, and resolved to make only one more extract from the bank for my travelling expenses. All my boxes and trunks were away; the iron safe empty, or rather full of "dummies," the representatives of thousands; my chambers cleared, for I always lived alone, and was greatly loved by my old laundress. I had not a shilling due to me in the world, and owed no

milk scores; for such paltry debts are always the fatal embarrassments that clog escape and impede free action at some momentous opportunity. I was seated alone and quiet in our bank parlour, awaiting the return for a cheque I had drawn, when a single tap was heard at the door.

I don't know how it was, but that one, single, short tap struck like a heavy hammer on my heart. I felt a foreboding of fate. Could it be possible? Was there a point at which I could be reached? Betrayed? No; I had no confederate. Found out? No; that was impossible. Was it?

The door opened, and in walked Atkins, then in full feather as a regular officer.

"Mr. Horsleydown," said he, touching his hat respectfully, "I have a message for you from the Lord Mayor. His lordship is somewhat in haste and much occupied, being engaged in his official duties as a magistrate at the Mansion House. He will, therefore, feel obliged by your stepping over to him there."

Atkins said this quite gravely, but I knew too well what it meant.

"Half a word, Mr. Atkins," said I. "Have you any written message, for I am quite as busy as his lordship, and otherwise I can't wait upon him?"

"Well, sir," said he, "as you are such a man of business, I am bound to say that I have a kind of letter, and this is it."

Here he held out to me a warrant for my apprehen-

sion, on the charge of forged entries and abstraction of moneys from the capital of the bank and the property of the depositors—not our own, unfortunately—to the tune of £260,000.

I saw at once it was all up. Would it be of any use to offer Atkins money to let me escape?

No; for I had not any cash at hand. All was put away, and I dared not draw it out, lest my foes, the myrmidons of the law, should track the golden stream back to its sources. Promising Atkins was like whistling to the wind: what was not ready was, to him, not in existence. Should I knock him down with a short hammer I always kept by me, or shoot him? To what purpose have his blood upon my hands? I never knew good to result from violence. My life was not in danger. The man was doing only his duty. The question was between me and the law, not between man and man. Had my life been risked I should have killed him: as it was not, I was quietly captured with eighteenpence halfpenny in my pocket.

"Atkins," said I, "there's my hand upon it. I will go with you. I suspect what all this means."

"I must caution you, Mr. Horsleydown, against saying anything to me which you may not wish repeated; it will all be used against you."

"Certainly, Atkins, and very properly; but let us have a cab—there's eighteenpence to pay for it—and go on at once."

He gave a look round the room to see if there were

any double doors, and then walked straight out before me, saying loudly as he did so,—

"Good morning, sir."

"Good morning, Atkins," I replied.

We were all of us familiar with Atkins at the bank just at that period, and there was nothing extraordinary in his visiting me.

I called him back, as if on some sudden thought, and then accompanied him to the door, apparently in earnest conversation. We turned back again together to the desk.

"Give Mr. Atkins five pounds," I said to the junior cash clerk, "and place it to my private account."

He did so, little suspecting how much that account was overdrawn. That was the last cheque drawn by John Horsleydown on Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co.

I stepped into the cab with Atkins (giving the half-penny to the cad who held the door open), saw the Lord Mayor, learnt the charge, and heard the story. Of course I knew it all before. They thought they had £500,000 at the Bank of England, and they had only £240,000; but as the £240,000 represented the £500,000, and did them and everybody else quite as much good, who was hurt, and where was the difference? Consequently, where was the wrong? Besides, why was the money in the Bank of England at all? In fact, the question resolved itself, after all, into a curious arithmetical one, and a discussion as to the

value of different systems of checks and audits of account; on a close investigation into which it was discovered that the wolves sometimes killed the sheep, but the watchers twice as often stole and ate them. Both points have been much discussed; so much so, indeed, that I was lost sight of in the contention; and up to the present day it has not been decided whether £2 per share is to be paid or received by the parties interested.

I was transported; but my partners had a chancery suit. Which of us got the worst of it?

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW I WAS CONVICTED OF FELONY AND SAVED MY HONOUR.

> "Let us not blame him, for against such chances
> The heaviest strife of virtue is not proof."
>
> *The Poetaster*, Act i., Scene i.

YES, it all came out—how the clerk of the pass-book passed it to me, and how I drew out the money and passed it into another book, and how the Bank of England's book and the pass-book I showed, always agreed; but the other one in my desk at home did not. Where all the money had gone, was another question. I had not a farthing, and was harassed by "executions," as the bailiffs call the last but one murderous process of the law. All this I had previously arranged. All I chose to say was that I had lost the money, and referred to speculations and a Jew broker who had gone. (I well knew he was gone dead, or I should not have mentioned his name.) Turkish Bonds, Russian Loans, Nova Scotia Debentures, Halifax Railway, Niaga-

Bridges, Swedish Estates, Hungarian Wines, and other such balloon investments, were all at hand to show clearly how the money had gone. Like the Greek merchants, who always keep a lot of these things ready to account for bankruptcy, there were plenty of bad bills of private and public discredit. All these did very well for the public; and, to my great vexation, one or two stockbrokers suffered from having transacted my legitimate business on the Exchange.

For myself, in the interim, I found Newgate a very comfortable residence. The governor, a capital fellow in his way, with whom I had often dined *en famille*, as well as at Corporation and other public dinners, took great care of me, as a matter of course, for his own sake; but, at the same time, treated me very well, and chatted with me pleasantly on the ordinary topics of the day. I had a room to myself, with large white-washed walls and a clean boarded floor—much better than any barrack room in the Queen's dominions. What right had I to complain? I had all I wanted, and one kind soul sent me money enough to pay my expenses. I never knew his name, and could not guess it. I could now realise the enjoyment of monkish life, and how people, tired of the world's weary bustle and fatiguing strife, could seek delightful leisure and contemplative retirement in a monastery, confining themselves to a cell and garden, or the sunny side of the cloister.

I once knew a humorous fellow in my early days

who found comfort in every condition, and when he broke his leg, would feel thankful that there were hospitals. We pressed him very hard one night, at the Craftsmen's Arms, to tell us what consolation he would find under sentence of death, and he replied,—

"They can't eat me."

Now, my comfort was that they could not hang me. Therefore, the crisis of the capture and detection being past, there was time, after all, for reflection as to the best method of improving the existing circumstances, and contriving extrication from them, and another chance.

But the sentence might be heavy—how to lighten it? Fortunately I discovered a method. Atkins also came in to see me and have a chat. The old fox suspected I had a "swag," and waited upon me in the hope of getting at it. In the course of conversation he told me one of the ledger clerks had been arrested as my accomplice. My accomplice indeed! The notion was ridiculous. My best accomplices were the carelessness of my partners, the indifference of the depositors, the crass, apathetic, headless, voiceless, brainless, soulless system of routine, sheep-follow-sheep style in which business of importance is, everywhere, conducted in this country. This hint of Atkins's gave me the opportunity. I sent to the lawyer against me; told him the young man was innocent; struck my bosom; said the accusation of an innocent young man, the probable sufferings of his family, were the heaviest, the most painful

punishment that could be inflicted upon me. Ah! I could bear all—ruin, poverty, ignominy, banishment from my country, loss of friends, degradation—but not the heart-weeping of an innocent man, injured for my fault. I told him I should make no defence, give no trouble, should confess all, and do my best to clear my partners with our customers, and place them right before the world. But I implored him to believe me, when I, who had never lied—(how I had the impudence to say so I can't imagine, but it told well, nevertheless, and I have often found that what we claim the world allows us at once until it finds us otherwise, which it need not unless we choose, or are foolish enough to permit it a chance)—when I declared by my mother's holy name (I never saw her in my life, and she was a poor drab, who left me in her gin-madness on the floor of a public-house, in front of the flaring bar, with a bruised nose and battered forehead) that young Anderson was utterly and totally ignorant of all that had taken place; and that, alone, I did it, driven by desperate hope of recovering my position, and confident in restoring that which, from the first, I had only regarded in the light of a loan to myself — on honour.

I carried out this plan on my next appearance at the Mansion House. It told immensely. The very reporters shed tears. An alderman actually came and shook hands with me, and the old governor of Newgate sympathised to such an extent as to swear I was a

right-down honest fellow, let them say what they like. Atkins told me the public had all come round to my side; and I believe, if the trial had not come off quickly, there would have been a benefit for me at the National Theatre, and a subscription on the Stock Exchange, and at Liverpool.

Talk of a diamond on a dunghill—the cheap parade of common feeling in a criminal took the public by surprise, as if something rare, and therefore valuable. I wonder what those who read the Sessions' reports think the wretches there condemned are constituted—flesh and blood like themselves? Ah! believe me, there 's many a thief leaves that bar a martyr and a hero, the victim only of circumstance.

CHAPTER XXX.

BEFORE GOING.

"Like rats oft bite the holy cords atwain,
Which are too intricate to be unloosed."
King Lear, Act ii., Scene ii.

I HAD not studied matters so long but that I well knew the importance of a good character to begin with in Australia, something that would elevate me above the common herd of swindlers and detected thieves, give a romantic touch to my name, and take off the abstract immorality of the normal notion of a theft. The bringing this about was a great point gained. The next thing to do was to arrange for the future. The present is always the time for suffering. My rule in life has been, the moment it has come to bad, don't stop to grumble, try to make it better.

Once when Levi Samuels, in Hounsditch, "did" a bill for Lipey Isaacs, in St. Mary Axe, the bill was coming due next day, and Lipey lay groaning all night in misery. At last, unable any longer to endure his wretchedness, he rose about three o'clock in the morn-

ing, and, going over to Levi Samuels' shop, rattled loudly against the shutters.

"Levi! Levi!" cried Lipey.

"What ish the matter, Lipey?" asked Levi Samuels, thrusting out his head from the window above. "Is your house burnt down?"

"Worse than that, Levi—oh, worse than that!" was Lipey's reply.

"Has Mrs. Lipey come back, then?" (The lady had been transported for picking pockets in omnibuses.)

"Worse than that!"

"What can be worse than that? You don't mean, Lipey—you don't mean that——"

"Yes, I do mean, Levi, I can't sleep. My heart is so broken, I can't sleep."

"Why can't you sleep, Lipey? why can't you sleep? Poor fellow!"

"I can't sleep, Levi, because your bill comes due to-morrow——"

"Yesh, Lipey, yesh. Why can't you sleep, Lipey?"

"I can't sleep, Levi, because I can't pay that bill."

"Oh, go away, Lipey, go away home, and go to bed; *it's me that can't sleep now!*"

So it was with me and my partners. The care was theirs now; with me it was all over. The crisis had passed—the secret was out; passive endurance was all that remained. Had I been whipped I might have cared for it, and I dare say I should not have run the risk of it. Few thieves now-a-days would. But simply

to be shut up and fed—fed well because shut up—there was nothing very dreadful about that, especially where there was a good course of lectures, a righteous governor, a pleasant chaplain, and turnkey schoolmasters. Bad company was a vexation, but this was beginning to be done away with; and it was not impossible that a short period at Bermuda, where the convicts were allowed every luxury, including the attendance of a darkey female servant, might fall to my share; and a few months at Gibraltar or Malta, *en route* for the Cedar Islands, might be a pleasant interval between Woolwich and South Australia.

Occupied with these thoughts, the time before my trial quickly passed away. My partners never came near me; my laundress, every morning at the wicket-gate, though hopeless of more wages, brought me clean linen and the small luxuries of humble life. My solicitor also, though I resolutely persisted in making no defence, was constant in attendance. I had much to arrange for the future. I was not yet a felon. The Crown could not yet stick its fangs in my property. Where would it have found it? But money was always necessary, and must be had and secured. I believe you would not be allowed even to starve in this blessed Englaud without the payment of fees to somebody. Fees! fees! everywhere. I have seen men, when I was a magistrate, fined sixpence, and sent to prison for the "costs, ten shillings"; and when I was in Aylesbury jail an old man of seventy-two years was brought

in bedridden, carried by two turnkeys, who had travelled to jail thirteen miles as a County Court prisoner, for twopence halfpenny, being "in contempt" for that instalment, and "seven shillings costs," on a debt of one shilling. "Contempt" forsooth! If there be anything in England that would justify a revolution, and be worth its bloodshed and its perils, it is the getting rid of that system of law by which the people are now overridden, trampled down, and cursed. It 's all sham, and all for the support of "a profession." There are quite as many thieves as there are lawyers; and, *vice versâ*. Why, then, is not thieving made "a profession" and "supported?"

Well, they tried me, and found me guilty—very properly. There was hardly a dry eye in court when my counsel got up and repeated my fine words about young Anderson, who was honourably acquitted, while I was honourably found guilty.

Poor fellów! he went to honest poverty, and his wife and children, while I—— But you must hear my story out.

There were several ladies in court; for the trial, of course, attracted much public attention; and there are men and women to whom these baitings of their human fellow-creatures,—these fearful fights for life and death,—these agonised emotions,—that calm passiveness (resulting from a bruised, broken, and despairing heart), —that phlegmatic apathy, mere brutal unconcern,—are so many interesting phases; as were the bloody wounds

the death struggle of the gladiators of old, to the Roman patrician. Foremost among this party of ladies, watching me attentively, and sometimes, I could not but observe, with an expression of concern, if not quite pity, was the Countess of Bathwick.

I watched her as the judge spoke a few words on my conduct in regard to the clerk, praised my manliness, and wished my rectitude had been equal. She looked at me, caught my eye, and pressed her gloved hands together as if applauding me. I bowed, and saw a blush suddenly flush up to her cheek as she haughtily turned her head aside.

From that moment I thought no more of judge and of jury. That woman, then, was my fate!

On my return to Newgate, sentenced and a convict, my clothes were changed suitably to my condition. They could not cut my hair shorter, and thus I was spared what is usually a great mortification, so true is it that vanity clings to the very lowest. The loss of hair and the taking away their bonnets are regarded by female convicts as the severest features of their punishment. The men suffer most from the privation of tobacco. To all but the educated thief the rest is the mere child's play of the schoolboy.

There was an interval only of a few hours. The next morning would see me on my way to Woolwich.

I sent for the governor, bade him farewell, and thanked him as if I were going to execution; then I asked him to dispatch a note for me to the Countess

of Bathwick, requesting her to call and see me that very evening, and telling her how to procure admission.

The name of the daughter of the Home Secretary had power even in Newgate. The letter was sent. She came.

"Man! why have you summoned me here?"

"Madam, why have you come?"

"That question is answered, sir," she said, "by my presence. What is it you want of me? Be brief."

"My pardon."

"Never—impossible!"

"I know it, madam; I am not so foolish; I mean in degree."

"Explain yourself, and why you ask me—me!——"

"To reproach me you came not here, my lady."

"Certainly not; I meant to do you some service."

"Thus, then, what has happened in court to-day, and what has been said previously, affords some slight excuse, were any needed, for extenuation of my sentence. Nay, start not; I mean not just now; but hereafter, when my case shall be no longer a ten days' wonder, but forgotten in some great crime or more or less unsuccessful plunder."

"What then? You must be transported."

"I know that, and am prepared for it; but after the first year I may receive a probation ticket; conduct myself well, which I shall do; and then, after two years more of apprenticeship, be set free—in the colony."

"If I do this, which does not appear impossible, as depending mainly on your own conduct, what then?"

"You shall receive back your diamonds." I observed her give a pleasurable start. "I will give you assurance of this."

"I require none. I will take your word."

That woman beat me. I could have knelt at her feet.

"Have you a pocket-book and pencil?"

She handed to me her tablets, and I wrote upon them an order. It was a very simple one. It was on my laundress for a duplicate. They were pawned for five pounds—the best method of concealment I have ever found out.

"If I refuse this?"

"On reaching Woolwich I summon the superintendent, and apply to your father. The jewels are worth £180,000——"

"Nothing to him."

"But your honour everything."

"If I take this" (holding up the paper), "and do nothing for you?"

"Then I acquaint the earl——"

"Pish!" she said; "he is insane. Dr. Brandley Pitt said his drunkenness was a physiological depravity extensively developed; so he locked him up, and keeps him out of my way for a thousand a year in his establishment."

"That is not *the* earl I mean, madam," said I. "Your son, I hope, is well?"

She gave a scream, and half rushed towards me, a tiger-look glaring in her eyes. Presently she recovered herself, and smiling, almost with kindness, positively held out her hand—she to me!—the countess to the convict!—the daughter of the Home Secretary to the thief!

"Farewell, sir; we may never meet again. All through, I can't help thinking you feel for me—pity me. If I live, what you wish for shall be done. To the last, look to me for good service; I may not require more from you. For this I thank you" (holding up the paper); "the balance between us is now in your favour. I owe you a good turn, and you shall see how I will do it. Farewell!"

She courtesied low to me, greatly to the surprise of the Governor, who opened the door. He had stood at the door all the while, but had received a Secretary of State's order not to listen, which he religiously obeyed, even to the extent of closing all the eye and ear holes which look and are pierced through every wall in Newgate by the staircase, as it passes up the side of the cell. This information may be useful to many a poor wretch whose secrets, told to none beside himself, have yet found recorders, to his detriment, in the secret councils of the Detective Police.

She performed her promise, as will be hereafter seen; but there was much to happen in the mean time.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE REVERSE OF THE MEDAL.

"Scarce men,
Rolling in brutish vices, and deform'd,
Violent or shameful death their due reward."
MILTON, *Paradise Regained.*

I PASS over the horrors of the convict system at Woolwich—the suffering, the degradation of the day in the dockyard, the inconceivable terrors, the indescribable bestiality of the night in the hulks. At last came the order for my transportation, and we were passed on board a convict ship.

The *Betsy Brownlow*—such was her name—had been an old West India ship, and was on her way through the regular process of decaying craft from a merchant ship to a collier. She was now in the stage of a convict transport ship.

The life of a seaman—a merchant seaman—is bad enough. He works worse than a negro, is treated worse than a dog, and fed worse than a pig; he starves with

cold, or is scorched with heat; drenched with wet, benumbed with frost, or blistered with the sun, he toils on still the same, periling his life daily and nightly, without glory and for scant wages, to sleep all night in a damp, dark cupboard on a plank, and if not robbed of his wages when he reaches the shore, is sure to spend them like a fool, and so begin again—a never-ceasing round of three hundred and sixty hard-working days, three days' drunkenness, one day's imprisonment, and one day's repentance every year of his life, which is known to be, on the average, of one-third less than the usual duration.

But if this be bad, what is that of the convict prisoner on a voyage? A hell upon the waters, freighted with damned souls, was the *Betsy Brownlow*. An ignorant captain, a brutal mate, a drunken surgeon (some half-bred, roistering walker of hospitals, set up in business in a half-built suburb, and now a swindler giving his creditors the slip)—these were our masters. Never shall I forget the tropical portion of our voyage—a blazing sun and scorching deck by day, a festering, reeking fever-hold by night!

For me,—what will not wealth accomplish? Atkins was despatched to arrest some nominally escaping debtor, through my means. His passage was paid; his cabin taken, his secret instructions given, with a handsome douceur inclosed, to take care of me on the voyage, and alleviate my doom with his society and influence.

The same was effected with the owner of the vessel, as soon as its name was known, and through him the captain was got over; so also the surgeon, to whom, when on board and out at sea, Atkins showed a warrant for his arrest instantly on reaching shore, to be discharged only on his declaring me too ill to keep below, ordering me wine, and permitting me to resume the voyage in Atkins's cabin. I might have escaped, had I so wished, for an American fast-sailing slaver slinking from the Horn could have been cruising for us, and the *Betsy Brownlow* have been heard of no more—gone with her drunken crew and disorderly convicts to the bottom, as has often happened before—on the Tahitian Islands, or the coral reefs of the Indian Ocean, a not unfrequent fate! But this was not my wish. It would have interfered with my intended course of life, long laid down. True, I had been beaten off the base-line of my operations; but I kept it steadily in view, and even now was retreating by a side movement to recover it, and march along once more, straight ahead on to my point. So away we sped, tumbling and tossing over the waters, until at last the *Betsy Brownlow* reached the shores of the newest of continents, and landed us safely in Australia.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HOW I SERVE, AND HOW I AM SERVED; WITH A FEW RATHER UNNECESSARY REFLECTIONS ON THINGS IN GENERAL.

"Darkness now rose
As daylight sank, and brought in low'ring night."
MILTON, *Paradise Regained.*

WITH my landing Atkins's duties ended. He tore up his warrants over a last bottle with the surgeon, kicked the captain, handcuffed the drunken mate, and landed him safely in the prison, the first night of our reaching shore. Some days afterwards, having opened an agency for Curry, Wilkins, and Stirling, in the capital city,—by which many an unlucky wight found himself sorely discomfited either on quitting or arriving in Australia,—he took his departure for New York in a Yankee clipper ship laden with lead and silk. As for myself, the old trick, learnt from a travelling beggar in my early days, of a sore leg, placed me in comparative comfort in an hospital, where my good conduct and the

reading of some of the newspapers containing my apprehension and the subsequent proceedings, and my trial, soon put matters in a right course for me. I was first made warder of convicts, a situation which gave me the opportunity of putting myself right with a score of the best men adapted for any future service: so that, as King of the Convicts I had them devoted and obedient. This was done by letting them know I could communicate for them with friends at home; have their wives and homes cared for in England, their children properly tended and brought up, and their aged parents relieved. Such is human nature, that there was not one man in a gang of twenty-five, however sullen and ferocious, that was not tamed by the exercise of these influences. But all this was done secretly, not as if I were above them, but as if I,—like them,—had been beaten in the fight, but, unlike them, had preserved a commissariat and military chest to support me through defeats.

Do any suppose that men—any men—are wild beasts—mere brutes? that they have no care for those about them? that they yield to temptation, solely, always, for the mere indulgence of their appetites? Such philosophers know nothing. Take women. How few fall from vicious inclinations only! Never was there a greater mistake: in nothing are mankind so ignorant. They want work—honest work—and good husbands; but you won't let them have the one,—not such as will pay them, not enough to feed them. You tempt them—you are always trying to tempt them.

You hold out, to a shabby, starving girl, fine clothes and generous food; and love, for discomfort; and pleasure, for endless worry; and freedom, for perpetual slavery; and then you complain that she falls! Falls! She rises!—at least so she thinks—and then you knock her down again. As for men; remove the lingering trace of serfdom in the law of settlement, which chains the rural labourer to one place; generalise your payment for keeping your poor, so that the United Kingdom shall support all equally, and not Liverpool, Bristol, and London alone, the poor of half Ireland; educate your children, that is, teach them reading, writing, and arithmetic, and nothing more, unless they seek after it themselves; teach them also to work; set them early to work, and find work for them, by having your navy always open to the surplus boy population; do away with your poaching laws, that irritate to roguery, while they nurture and encourage crime; and your criminal population, as you choose to style it, will be nipped at once in the bud, and finally extinguished. But I forget; I am not yet in the British House of Commons, only on my way to the Australian Legislature, and as yet a convict. Patience, and shuffle the cards!

My probation time came round. The Countess of Bathwick had kept her word. This was the first instalment. O horror! Half of my wish was accomplished. Better have suffered death than the torture of that man's service. He had been himself a convict, the wretch I was

allotted to. He took me up in the country, and sent me to farm labour, shackled by the foot to prevent my escape. We were far away in what we all then thought was an open country backed by deserts; nothing before but brutal usage, blows—yes, blows!—and curses; nothing beyond but dreary, unknown wastes; no communication with the coast; no chance of escape that way; no one near to be bought; no hope of mercy; none of bribing this atrocious villain, who had been, in his time, the cruellest of burglars, and was said to have been stained with murder. Now, he was a great landholder, had sheep by thousands, and stock by hundreds, and took delight in tyrannising over his fellows. I could have killed him, but he would not let me; gave me no chance; kept a discreet distance; always carried a stock whip, with long lash and loaded handle; wore pistols; always looked after me on horseback; and never slept near me.

I had some fancy it had been managed by some unfair influence with my erst partners of Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co., that this man should be my master, that in despair I might murder him and be hanged, or escape and be lost in the desert, or commit suicide, and with me bury all their trade secrets.

He had a woman with him—his wife she called herself—and she was a demon incarnate—the cunningest, craftiest, most subtle, and certainly the most cruel of her sex. She was herself a convict. The story of her conviction I afterwards learnt, and it was a curious one.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

HOW SOPHY JONES ROBBED THE DRAPER.

"And wanting nothing but an honest heart."

POPE.

ONE fine May morning, just as the linen-drapers were spreading out their gayest goods to attract the female butterflies of fashion, there walked into the shop of Mr. Haslock, of Oxford Street, an elegant-looking female, about twenty-three years of age, dressed entirely in black silk, who, taking a seat, requested to look at some black silks. The polite shopkeeper waited in person upon his early customer, expecting she had come to make some large mourning purchase; and, lifting down several pieces of silk, placed them before her. But the lady said these were not good enough; she wished some of a better quality. More were brought, and passed her judgment, were approved and selected, together with a piece of lace and black velvet for trimmings, some lining and the ordinary et cætera. But ladies cannot wear silk dresses always, so she ordered,

in addition, some muslin robes, which, not being in stock, Mr. Haslock forthwith despatched a porter into the city to procure from the warehouse that supplied him.

The goods were packed up to the lady's order, with a direction to be sent to No. 17, Mulgrave Square, a West End locality not too particular in its fair in habitants, as being near to the barracks of the Life Guards, and close upon the loving vicinity of Brompton.

Of course the goods were to be paid for on delivery; nor did the wary Mr. Haslock let them leave his shop without due caution to his best young man, who was to take them in a cab, and not to leave them without the money; for the goods once left, the transaction becomes simply one of debt—a minute's credit, as decided by the magistrates, being equal to credit for a month or a year, and therefore a mere matter of debt.

Away went the lady; and a short time afterwards,—as soon as the porter could return back by omnibus from the city with the muslin robes,—away went Mr. Octavius Spooner Green, the salesman to Mr. Haslock, with the parcel of goods to the address mentioned, determined to be more than usually cautious, and resolute not to be outwitted. To make assurance doubly sure, Mr. Octavius Spooner Green took with him Mr. Haslock's trusty porter, one Obadiah Quick, whom he left in the passage with the silks while he went upstairs with the muslins and trimmings, thus, cleverly as

he thought, dividing the risk, at any rate, while he insured a complete command of the exit.

He was shown into the drawing-room on the first floor, and the lady customer quickly made her appearance, through the folding doors, out of the back room, which the experienced eye of the astute young salesman enabled him to discover to be a bedroom opening into the sitting-room, as is usual in such localities. Mr. Octavius Spooner Green, by no means thrown off his guard by this circumstance, then displayed the muslin robes and trimmings, of which the lady was pleased to express her approbation, qualified only with her regret and surprise at the non-appearance of the silks she had ordered. Upon this Mr. Green informed her they were downstairs, and that he would order them to be brought upstairs.

He did so, and unfolded them. The lady carefully and slowly examined them, and then told him the purchases she had made were for an invalid lady, Mrs. Vernon de Montague, who was in bed in the adjoining room, and would wish to see them.

This was natural enough; so he allowed her to take the muslins and lace into the room for the sick lady's inspection. Presently he heard a voice say in a low, plaintive tone, as if enfeebled by sickness, "I must see the silks too;" and the first lady then returned into the drawing-room where he was, and told him, "The lady wishes very much to see the silks." This did not quite please Mr. Octavius Spooner Green, who thus

saw both parcels about to quit his sight; but on the first lady saying to him in a plausible and insinuating manner, "Surely, sir, you would not wish to intrude on the privacy of a sick lady's chamber; I cannot admit you there, sir," the poor young man was quite thrown off his guard, and permitted the pretty young lady to carry the silks into the bedroom, the door of which, however, was left partially open, as if out of a kind wish on the part of the young lady to appease his tradesmanlike alarm. She looked at him as she did this with a most winning smile, and poor Octavius Spooner Green blushed up to the roots of his red hair, so much ashamed of himself did he feel for suspecting so beautiful and obliging a creature, and so flattered by her delicate deference to his scruples on behalf of his employer. What a fool had he been to entertain such suspicions! How unworthy, and how unmanly! The very conversation he heard at once convinced him of the groundlessness of any such a notion. He heard the two ladies speaking of the quality of the articles, one of them in the gentle voice of his beautiful customer, the other with the depressed tone of an invalid. The former soon after came again into the room, and asked for the velvet, which he handed to her with the greater alacrity that, at that moment, (ah, naughty Octavius to peep!) he caught sight of the figure of a lady in bed.

Then ensued another conversation, and again the young lady emerged from the bedroom, and said the niece of the invalid lady was gone over the way to call

on a lady living there, and she would fetch her to see the muslin robes. Knowing he had the invalid lady in bed, as a hostage if anything wrong were intended, he made no objection, as how could he? but still, with that exceeding cunning that belonged to Octavius Spooner Green, he bethought himself of a udden *ruse* or dodge, that would take her off her guard if any trick were intended.

"By the by," said he, "before you go I should like to see the short length of silk." (The cunning elf!) "I am afraid there is some mistake in the measurement."

The young lady, not at all disconcerted, smiled assent, and, going back into the room, returned with the piece of silk, which she handed to him, and requested him to measure it. He looked at it, and found it all right; not short by some yards, as he might have suspected.

"If you leave it here," said he, "I will take care of it until you return."

To this the lady, tranquilly, replied,—

"No, I cannot do that; I must take it away and put it into a drawer. If I do not, the niece will want a black silk gown, which is exactly what her aunt does not wish her to have just at present."

There could be no objection to this on the part of Mr. Octavius Spooner Green. What right had he to interfere in the lady's family arrangements? So she went into the bedroom, spoke to the invalid, who approved of what she had done, opened the drawer—for

Green heard her do so—and, soon after, came through the drawing-room with her bonnet and shawl on, and went out of the house.

Octavius admired her retreating figure, and waited patiently for her return. Five minutes passed—ten minutes—a quarter of an hour—twenty minutes—half an hour—an age! Mr. Octavius Spooner Green became impatient, went to the window, saw no one—not even a nursery-maid—in the square. Presently he heard a step coming downstairs from the rooms above. He rushed to the door, it quickly opened, and saw a female servant.

He asked her when the lady he had been speaking to would return.

"I don't know, sir," replied Betsy; "she has only just hired the apartments."

The blood of Octavius rushed to his heart.

"Can I speak to the sick lady in the bedroom?" inquired he, in rather a flurried manner.

"There is no sick lady in the bedroom," replied Betsy, with a stare of surprise. "I don't know what you mean, sir."

The blood of Spooner Green ran cold. He rushed madly into the bedroom. No one was there! The property was gone! The drawers were empty; the false and faithless she—she with the double voice—had got away with the silks, lace, velvet, and muslins, and there had been no invalid lady in bed, or in the bedroom.

The policeman summoned made all inquiries; but the result worked out was, that no one was to blame. Every one had been duped—landlord, landlady, servant, linen-draper, Obadiah Quick, to whom the fair deluder gave sixpence as she passed him, and Octavius Spooner Green, to whom she had only given a heart-ache.

But though fair and clever, she was not wise. She carried off this prize on Friday afternoon, and on Saturday morning went to Mr. Fuller, in the remote East, seeing it was to be a business transaction, even to the Commercial Road, to pawn it. She succeeded with one piece; but, luckless fair! came again, in the afternoon, with more. The loss had got wind; notice had been sent round, she was questioned, became confused, was detained, dropped two duplicates of other stolen silks pledged with equal want of caution, was given into custody, and the next morning "Sophia Jones, a well-dressed woman, aged twenty-three, and described as having no occupation, and dwelling at No. 16, Newton Crescent, Hackney Wick Terrace, Paddington Butts, was brought up before Mr. Sharpington, at the Holloway Police Court, charged with stealing 50 yards of black silk, 9½ yards of Valenciennes lace, and 10 yards of black velvet, value £17 10s., the property of Mr. James Haslock, linen-draper, of 1001, Oxford Street."

She was committed, tried, and convicted, Sergeant Bumptious, of the Z Division, giving evidence that she had been well known for some time past as a robber of

furnished lodgings, and plunderer of credulous tradesmen. Why she had not been apprehended before Sergeant Bumptious, of the Z Division, did not condescend to inform the bench. Sophia Jones could have told this herself, but she was partial to Sergeant Bumptious, of the Z Division, having been lady's maid on his beat when a private policeman, and therefore held her tongue. She was transported for seven years; was sent out at once as a desirable female colonist, married my rascally master, and lost no opportunity of getting into a quarrel with me, and causing "words," or rather oaths, between us.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE GOLD DISCOVERY.

"He meets the roughness of the middle waste,
Far from the track, and blest abode of man;
While round him night resistless closes fast,
And every tempest, howling o'er his head,
Renders the savage wilderness more wild.
Then throng the busy shapes into his mind."

THOMSON.

I COULD bear it no longer—the worry of that woman, the brutal ferocity of that master. I filed off my shackles one evening after a day of toil through a dust-storm—one of the afflictions of that blessed country. Where to go I knew not, whither I was going I cared not, but with knife in girdle, axe in hand, water-bottle slung over my shoulder, and bag with two days' flour and biscuits long hoarded, off I started into the darkness, walking straight on toward the bush which skirted the horizon, and was said to separate us from the desert.

There were strange stories among the convicts of the geography of the Australian continent. They

fancied that everywhere led to China. Why China in particular I never could make out, save that the China ships sometimes called in to pick up a half cargo or so, when they were light, on their way home. Water they told me there was plenty in the middle of the continent; some swore they had seen mountains from the bush; others spoke of fertile plains; and one old Cornwall miner, who had been sent over for killing his wife in a kind of chance medley, and assuredly without intent, told me there was certainly something better. What this was, he would never say, confining himself to dark hints, and oftentimes taking long walks, with a hammer on his shoulder, far away from his sheep. All of a sudden, he took his passage home, having served out his time; and, to everybody's astonishment, went off dressed, as he said, "to the nines," as a first-class cabin passenger, and with several very heavy boxes, besides a bundle of bank-notes. It was as well he took himself off so quickly, for there was a plan laid to "shake" him the next night, but he got on board ship the evening previous, and never showed himself ashore afterwards.

Pursuit of me I knew to be fruitless, and so did my master. He was glad to get rid of me; indeed, I suspect him to have been well paid for it. The next servant he had "knifed" him; and it happened that he did so before the scoundrel had time to report my running into the bush—a lucky chance for me as it afterwards turned out.

Oh, the dreary anxiety of that long, long, weary

walk! Alone through the night, sleeping by day, over a brown, parched, waterless waste, no trees but gum and evergreens, and through clumps of prickly pear and the tough, sharp-pointed aloes, that cling to you, and tear and scratch like a scolding wife, at once sticking to you and cursing you. In two days my food, in three my store of water, were exhausted, and not a drop within ken or sight. On the fourth, with parched tongue and wearied limbs, I found myself in a district evidently mineral. The reddening gloom above betokened a coming storm. Soon the clouds dashing across the sky, and the fierce struggling winds, told me of an impending hurricane and dust-storm. It came, whirling and blinding me as it passed, throwing me to the earth, and filling eyes, ears, and nostrils with the angular particles of the minutest conceivable scoria, cutting and piercing the skin wherever exposed. Then came a growling tempest and a thunder-storm with tremendous crash, and lightnings that seemed to rend the very walls of heaven. Last came a mighty hail. O how I gathered these frozen dewdrops! A whole flood fell in one vast sheet of rain from the heavens. I wrung my wet clothes, and lay and sucked the moisture with delighted lips, then hastened to fill my bottle from a neighbouring hollow, before entirely parched, and marched on happily, if not quite contented.

Thirst was appeased, to be followed by an enemy equally as dire—hunger. I was now a second day without food; one more, and progress would become

impossible. Not a beast nor a bird could be seen. There were no eggs to be found—not even the carcass or the bones of any animal. Yes, there was one bird, alas! swooping down — a solitary speck in the vast horizon. 'Twas a vulture, that had accompanied me for two days, soaring over and around me, above my head, sometimes coming close, as if to peer at me and see how nearly I was dead, or curious to discern what was hindering me from dying. He was always near me, hovering and floating about and around. So have I seen from a ship at sea a gull fluttering about her, and flying backwards and forwards across her wake, right out into the open sea, and seeking, as it were, to bide by her companionship.

But this vulture had no such friendly intention. He wanted to pick my bones, and coolly calculated on my fall, and wondered at its delay. Vulture of doom! He scents his lonely victims' blood, and doubtless had accompanied many a wanderer along this desert land, soaring triumphantly, yet patiently, over his head until the moment when the desolate wretch sat down on the grass, uttered one despairing cry of prayer, and died in the wilderness, unknown and unsearched for. Voices and sounds in this lonely region I never heard. Sadly silent is the land where even the beasts do not roar, nor the dogs bark, nor the birds sing.

Faint, panting, weary, and exhausted, I looked around me. The ground was dry and barren. In the distance, as if to mock me, shone a glittering line — 'twas

water! About me the parched earth was strewed with minerals; by the side of me was a large stone, and at my feet, O heaven! a path—a worn track, almost a road, with footprints of cattle and men almost fresh, and the ruts of wheels hardly yet grass-grown!

I must be near some Station. Help was near me: to which side ought I to turn? I knew not, nor would the knowledge have availed me. The film of death was closing over my eyes. My spirit was in the land of dreams; it sought my hoarded wealth—it spread its wings after my lost hopes. The heaving tide of passion rose once more high within my heart. In fierce anger, and desperate with rage—at what? at fate? or Providence? or fortune? or myself? who was to blame? —I struck a blow with my hatchet at the stone, and cursed it that it was not bread, or blood and flesh, whether of beast or man, that I might satisfy the cruel hunger that tore my vitals—that I might eat and live!

With the blow came off, splintering, a large piece of the old stone, striking me as it fell. I kicked it with my foot, and it rolled over. I saw it shining in the sunlight, and, listlessly, looked at it.

Did my eyes deceive me? Was The Tempter by my side mocking me? Could it be? Was this GOLD? Yes! a solid mass of gold, scarcely coated with rock—quartz I think they call it—a sparkling white stone, only less fine than marble, but crystal—formed and polished. The blood rushed back to my heart, and ran, for a few

moments, coursing through my veins. The fever of avarice lighted up the almost-dying lamp of life within me. A sudden thought struck me. This must be the track leading to the sheep walk of the old Cornish miner. It was hitherward the shepherd used to wander, far from all, returning freighted with this golden treasure. Yes! this stone!—I now remembered it. For years it had stood beside the path; for years the convict labourers had met about it to smoke their pipes at night—there were the marks of their many fires; for years they had rested their burdens upon it in the day. And it was gold! And I had discovered it! I leaped, I danced, I laughed, and shouted "GOLD! GOLD!" The world was mine, and all with in it. I held the master key of all men's hopes and fears. Mine would be mankind's honour; mine, woman's love; mine, troops of friends, of servants, of menials, and of slaves. To me the wise would come for help, the soldier for his sword, the merchant for his ships, the poet for his lyre. I could do good, I could do bad—all, all was in my power!

Then I fainted. The vision was too exalting; the opening vista too large for ken; the expanding thought too vast for human capacity. I grasped the stone in falling, and I kissed the idol of my soul. Then I came to, but weak, and more exhausted, and raging wildly, and falling in my feebleness with hunger. Hunger! Famine! Fierce devils with iron nails tearing at my very vitals! O for one loaf! I would give—yes, all my hidden wealth. A crust—one hard

crust! Tempt me with dainties—yes! take all—take my newly-found fortune, my gold, and give me but a crust! I rolled in agony, and vainly essayed to shriek. Ah, a sound! Aid approaches! "Come! haste! quick! I will make thee rich beyond all avarice! Come! help! help!" I screamed.

It was the vulture cowering down upon me: the rustle of his pinions had deceived me into hope!

I am dying; but the gold—should it die with me? Was this wondrous store of happiness for the world to be lost? No; I would have the merit of one good action even in my death. Some poor wretch, some miserable slave, some degraded convict, should be raised, suddenly, by this, above his fellows. With my last force I jammed between the broken stone and my axe, a dry branch of the withered gum tree growing near the spot. It was the only good deed with an unselfish thought I had ever done in all my life.

That deed saved my life. As the bough rose I fell, but it caught the eye of a convict labourer in a distant field. He knew it to be strange, and hastened forward; and he supplied me with moist "damper," and refreshing tea; and saved my life.

That I was afterwards obliged to cleave him to the earth, and bury his body in the ravine below, was not my fault. We quarrelled about the gold. There it was in millions, lying about like sand on the earth; but we each wanted that one Stone; and grasped it in our arms, though too large for both of us to carry; and

fought for it fiercely; until we fell wearied and worn out with conflict. Then we swore a truce, and became friends, and tossed up for the stone, and I won it (I always win the toss), and we smoked our pipes, and laughed and sang, and told stories and went to sleep, and I lay awake, and he tried to knife me as I lay, and I struck him up in the face as he glowered down upon me by the light of the expiring embers of our fire. Red gleamed his face, and a lurid light shone from his eyes out of that dark Australian night. I struck him, and I clove his head to the jaws, and I killed him, and I buried him, and I went into the town, and I found my free ticket there, and I told them *I had discovered the gold!*

CHAPTER XXXV.

HOW I BECAME RESPECTABLE ONCE MORE.

"What is this?
Gold!"

SHAKSPEARE.

My return into the city of Melbourne was a triumph; for my master's death in the interval had concealed my absconding into the Bush; and my liberation for one year of probation, with a free pardon afterwards, conditional on my not leaving the country, had duly arrived. The Government messenger was about to start with the good tidings just as I entered the town. Fortune was now before me. First I secured a certain amount of land in the vicinity of my great discovery; next I hired horses and a wagon; and appointing relays to meet me at a particular place on my return, I toiled steadily, and alone, back to my golden harvest. I found it—such as not to disappoint my expectation; brought home a wagon-load; tested it; and then, after placing it in security, communicated with the authorities, of whom I required, as a condition of im-

parting my secret, my immediate and unconditional freedom. This was conceded, and I shook off my convict's dress, and stood forth at once the richest man in Australia.

I need not particularise the gold fever that followed. Its immediate effect on Australia, and subsequent influence on the world, were naturally of an enormous and eccentric nature. One thing, however, I soon found out—namely, that the surface gold was soon exhausted; that it was an accident, possibly of thousands of centuries, by some convulsion of nature, some extraordinary electrical disturbance; for I am convinced that the combination of metals called gold (and it is only a combination) is due to electrical influences and the detrition of the elements through ages. The further finding of gold, and its extraction, had to be brought about by washing, digging, crushing, and other hard labour. This did not suit me. I had already gold enough; and when I had cleared my acres, which I soon did, I sold my estate as a solid block of gold to certain English capitalists, who parted with it again for three times the amount to certain Stock Exchange speculators, who resold it to the English public at a large premium, who lost all their money.

We had some trouble at first with the Government, which, upon the advice of the Colonial Office, wanted to claim all the gold as the property of the Crown. But some of the labourers, under my direction, showed a bold front, in company with my convict friends; and

as there were no soldiers (they unanimously ran away at once up to the gold diggings, leaving their officers to clean their own boots), a threat of sweeping off the whole pack of officials, and setting up a government of our own, purchasing soldiers, and giving away commissions, and buying a fleet—which, as we had more gold than all the rest of the world together (as was then thought, and is not yet disproved), could easily have been effected—brought the Government to a right sense of their true position under such irregular circumstances. So they made the best of it, because they could not help it, and let us have our own way, requiring merely a register-ticket, at so much per head, from each digger.

I set to work at once, buying up all the land in and about Melbourne; for I knew that all the world, and all the trade of the world, would run to the gold And so it proved. In former days every emigrant used to use £8 a year of exports from home; he now consumed £50 per annum; and the number of emigrants, multiplied by hundreds of thousands, totally overpowered and obscured the convict population. Land rose to a prodigious value. What I had bought for £10 became worth £5000; and a shop or house frontage in the Antipodes was as valuable as one in Cheapside. I made the most of this market, and continued, at the same time, the buying and selling of lands in the Gold Districts. These I had surveyed by fellows with flashy names, who gave glowing certificates of their value, that drove the English public raging mad to have all they could get

My wealth thus accumulated to colossal dimensions, and my acuteness was, of course, equally appreciated. I was the most respected man in the colony; married a charming woman, who pinned her faith on the sleeve of my own account of myself, and who really and sincerely loved me. I became the happy father of four children, a member of the Legislature, and of the Legislative Council—the Honourable John Horsley-down!

One thing grieved me much. With all this wealth and this domestic happiness, there was one thing unsatisfactory. My wife was constantly urging me to go to England. I could not do so, free though I was, since there I should have had to take up a ruined character. Besides, my pardon was conditional, and my agreement for immediate freedom only locally efficient. This obstacle might have been removed; but it might not have been wise to ask it, in the lifetime of the countess's father, with all the records of the office open before him, and perhaps his daughter's information. It would not be wise to run the risk of a refusal. I must bide my time.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE GOLD SHIP PIRACY.

"While the appetite for gold, unslumbering, watcheth to glut its maw."

Proverbial Philosophy, BY MARTIN FARQUHAR TUPPER.

WHILE every one else was digging for the gold, and working hard for riches, it struck me that there was a better plan; I mean, one more in unison with my habits and feelings. This was to wait until some of them had dug the gold up, and then take it away from them. Up the country this was not quite a safe game, besides being very hard work, which I abhorred. It was the same, in fact, as earning the money; so I resolved to let the gold be brought down to the Port first, and then release it.

I need not say that one of the first effects of the gold discoveries was the instant desertion by its crew of almost every merchant ship that reached our wealthy shores. So far as the cargoes from home to us were concerned this was of little consequence. Those tha+

wanted the goods were eager enough to fetch them; but when the gold had been brought down to the port, and the vessels freighted, the diggers rushed back again for more—always more. So the ships lay with their sails flapping in the harbour, the captain and mate unable to lift their anchors unassisted. I saw this was my time. I had a strong party of reckless desperadoes at my beck, whom I always kept well supplied with money; and I determined to rob the first ship that had a good freight. Nor had I to wait long for an opportunity. Among some parties to whom I had been introduced at the governor's house (I always visited in the best society) was the captain of a merchant ship called the *Admiral*, who, having put into Geelong, and been deserted by all his men, had, with his first officer and seven men he had, with much trouble and very high wages, been enabled to enlist, run along to Melbourne, in the hope of making up a crew to take her home. At Geelong the skipper had received a large freight of gold-dust, and at Melbourne he got more; but men were not to be had. We became capital friends, and I determined to accommodate him, but not quite in the manner he anticipated. There was £150,000 on board the ship, and have my share of it I would.

The rendezvous was given for half-past ten, and as pretty a set of old crackmen, swell-mobsmen, and the pick of London thieves met together that night at Jack Custang's as you could meet on this side of the world's end. They were all ticket-of-leave men, and every one

of us understood the other. The plan was this—that at any risk the robbery was to be effected, and the swag divided, share and share alike; that I was to have three shares, conditionally, making twelve in the whole, guaranteeing, in return for the two extra shares, to take care of all that were caught, and protect them, give them the chance of escape, see to their women and children, pay the lawyers for their defence—in fact, act as an Assurance Office would, in such cases, were roguery, robbery, and murder—made matters of average risk, just as other casualties—fire, accident, and death, and the breaking of plate glass—which they certainly ought to be. All the men knew they could depend on me. I was a man of honour, and they left it to my option whether to go with them or not; but as I did not depend on them, and only incurred the risk, and took the premium, to insure their not "peaching" in case of accident, I went with them.

There had been a great deal of merriment going on in the city and the grog-shops, owing to the recent arrival of a gang of diggers from the upper diggings. It was between twelve and one before I could get them all together in our disguises—long cloaks to conceal our persons, and crape to cover our faces—the best of all disguises. If men dress all in black, which is the only right colour to go thieving in, the figure, the face, and the voice can alone then be distinguished. The cloak mystifies the first; the crape muffles the second; and as to the third, the less said the better, and then in a

squeaking voice. I have often regretted, in the course of my experience, that the same art was not applied to Thieving as a profession as there is to Law, which is at the other end of the stick. Both require the same brazen impudence, the same effrontery, the same ready wit and quick use of resources; and, as far as the morality of the thing goes, both are much on a par. One nudges his fellow-man to get the better at his pockets; the other advises him, and picks his pockets all the same.

However, "let that flea stick to the wall," as the old Duke of Hamilton used to say. It was bright moonlight, and we pulled into the harbour, close up to a ship which we thought was the *Admiral*, and hailed her. The second mate was keeping watch alone, for the master was on shore, looking out for seamen. He answered our hail by saying that the *Admiral* had sailed two hours before. This rather baffled us; but, as we had come out for work, we determined to do some.

"What ship?"

"The *Nelson*," he replied.

"She'll do," was the answer; and he, thinking that the boat full of men had been obtained by the master for the ship, blessed his lucky stars, and threw us down a rope. The mate was thunderstruck when we leaped on board, swearing and shouting like demons; for there is nothing frightens people so much, when taken by surprise, as roaring and raging at them. Two

of our men made straight at him, pistol in hand, and threatened him with instant death if he shouted or spoke. Down he was in a moment, a rope round his arms, and a rope round his feet.

At the same instant, the other seven of us tackled the fellows in the forecastle. Seizing them all at the same moment, and levelling our pistols at their heads, we threatened, with the most terrific imprecations, to murder and massacre every one on board, if the slightest resistance was offered. Draper, the chief mate, was served the same; but he was a brave fellow, and wanted to show fight, even against such odds. He made a rush at the captain's pistols, which were hanging up in the cuddy, whereto we had now pushed our way, and but for Jack Custang's cutting him over the fingers, would have succeeded in giving the alarm. After this, the first thing we did was to throw all the ship's arms overboard.

"What do you want?" said Draper.

"Just all the gold-dust you have got," was the reply.

"There is none here," said Draper.

"That be ——!" was the unanimous answer. And, lowering the muzzle to his nose, Jack requested him to sniff the barrel, and see if he could smell a bullet, for that certainly he would get one in three minutes if he did not tell where the gold was kept.

Draper still pleaded ignorance, and refused; so we followed the old buccaneers' plan, and tried his courage

with some burning matches between his fingers. He could not stand this long, and let us, gently, into the secret. He might as well have taken our first offer of a share; but he said it was not ours to give, and he would not have it. We soon tore open the locker, and bundled out the boxes of gold into the cabin, and up to the gangway, and down to the boat. It was delightfully heavy—8600 ounces—and worth £30,000. This done, we determined to have another look for more, and ransacked the ship through. This greediness had like to have been our ruin; for Draper, speaking sharply to one of our fellows, who was tearing some of the captain's papers as he turned over his chest and drawers, Bill Morgan—he was a regular buccaneer of the old sort, had been a burglar of the wrong sort, was suspected of murder, and convicted of highway robbery under brutal circumstances—deliberately shot the poor mate, and would have killed him, but that I struck his pistol down at the moment, and he only hit Draper on the legs. Poor Bill Morgan! that shot cost him his life. He forgave me afterwards, when I visited him as High Sheriff in the jail: "Though," said he, "if you had only let my hand alone that night, guv'nor, he never would have wagged tongue to 'dentify me by his evidence." However, this shot made us think it was time to look out for ourselves, and get home with the plunder. So we tied the crew together, and shoved them into the secret place where the gold had been, closing the trap upon them, and piling no end of heavy goods

on the top of it, just to keep them quiet while we cleared out of the ship.

It happened, however, that while we were in the forecastle, the cook, who was in some corner, had escaped notice; so, as soon as we quitted the vessel's side, he came out of his hiding-place and released the crew. But fortunately this was so difficult to effect, and took so much time, that before the alarm could be given we were on shore. Once there, no clue was left behind. The boat could not be identified, there were so many in the harbour all alike. Some of the boxes were strewed on the beach, opened, and their contents cleared out; but these could tell no tales. Unluckily, however, Jack Custang, whose son was at college at Sydney, attending to his education, took a fancy to pay him a visit, and give him some of the money. As Jack's son was going into the Church, Jack thought he had better drink all he could before he started, as he could not disgrace his boy at College by smoking and drinking there, especially as the lad was a great favourite with the Bishop. That was the ruin of the lot. I never knew a Bishop put his finger into any pie but what he spoilt it. I can't think what Bishops are for, for my part. They are to look after the clergy, but the clergy won't be interfered with; so all the Bishop does is to say, "Be quiet," and enjoy himself. I wish I had been articled to a Bishop myself in my young days; I might have been an Archbishop surely by this time, with my money, and my brains, and temper.

Some one of the crew was drinking at the last grog-house that Jack visited before going off to the schooner that was to convey him to Sydney, and in a drunken fit Jack quarrelled with the sailor about some bounce he told respecting his own valour on the occasion, as if anything any man said ever mattered at all. Jack contradicted the fellow flatly.

"Perhaps you were there?" said the sailor.

"To be sure I was," replied Jack; "and you *are* a liar, I know;" and off Jack went.

But the sailor told a policeman, and the policeman boarded the schooner and found Jack fast asleep, and searched his carpet bag, and saw some gold-dust there, and got a clue to the whole party, myself excepted. Bill Morgan was hanged; three others transported for life, which is worse than death; and five more were tried for piracy, and got off with a few years in irons. The tenth man was never heard of, although the high sheriff at the time used every exertion to secure him.

They did say he was concealed all the while in the High Sheriff's house; but every one knew that the Honourable John Horsleydown, who filled that office at the time, was much too acute for such a circumstance to happen.

He behaved with great humanity to the prisoners, and was sedulous in endeavouring to elicit from them a confession as to the accomplices, and where they had placed the proceeds of the robbery; for it was found impossible to lay hands on more than £7000 of it.

All his efforts were in vain, though. The *Nelson* sailed without her gold freight; and long before the return advices reached the Melbourne governor, the three men transported to Norfolk Island had made their way out, murdering, *en route*, two turnkeys and a trained schoolmaster; while the five fellows in irons had conducted themselves so well as to receive new tickets of leave, with which they were despatched to a pleasant farm in the interior belonging to the High Sheriff.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE BALLARAT BANK ROBBERY.

"To arms! ye brave."

THE next thing to getting the gold when shipped was to "grab" it when deposited in a bank, preparatory to being despatched by escort. This opportunity arose one October night at Ballarat, where it came to my knowledge that a great value of gold, in dust and nuggets, would be deposited, waiting the coming down of the police escort. Taking with me three of the same gang as had assisted me in the clearance of the *Nelson*, I ensconced them snugly and quietly in a thicket at the back of the bank, until the time agreed upon for the robbery had arrived. I then walked into the bank myself, as if to transact some business, and, while there, stepped towards the outside door and opened it, as if to look out at the weather. No sooner as this done than "Coo-ee!" was heard, and my three

accomplices stepped forth from the thicket, ran up to the door, pushed past me, and entered the bank, their faces covered with crape, and a pistol in each hand. These weapons I had taken care should be specially charged with paper only, lest the men, in their impetuosity, might fall into mischief. They seized and gagged the clerk, and myself also; and two of them proceeded to rifle the bank, while one stood sentry at the door—I, of course, watching fair play. The eagerness of the rogues was amusing as they tied up the gold and notes in their pocket handkerchiefs; and so large was the haul that it was extremely difficult to stow it away. The money carried away was officially gazetted in the colonial *Hue and Cry* as £14,300 sterling, and 200 ounces of gold-dust—a rare day's work.

Our next feat was the crowning exploit of my Australian efforts. One fine September morning, Mr. Warner, Escort Superintendent, started with his troop, consisting of a sergeant and three mounted men, from the M'Ivor Diggings. They had in their charge 2230 ounces of gold (value, £4 15s. an ounce), and about £700 in cash, packed up in tin boxes. Each trooper was armed with a sword, carbine, and pistol, the superintendent and the sergeant carring a six-barrelled revolver in addition. The tin boxes were placed in a cart, the driver of which was unarmed; and it was always an understood thing between gold robbers and the carter—as used to be the case in England, in the

good old days, between highwaymen and postilions—that they should never be fired at. This was an important point, because in most cases, had the driver galloped his horses off in the first confusion of an attack, the thieves would have had little besides the fighting for their pains, and fighting is by no means a thief's business.

Seven miles from the M'Ivor Diggings, and three miles from a station known as the Mi-Mi (the native word for a hut), where the escort first stops to rest the horses, they noticed a log or fallen tree lying across the road (which is only a wheel track, like a roadway across an English common or a green lane), and near it a ruined hut, or *mi-mi*, constructed of boughs and branches. There was nothing unusual in this, so the party continued its march, little expecting what was in store for them. I was lying in the hut, and could see the superintendent and sergeant riding up some yards in advance, steadily looking out, from habit, on both sides as they came up. The other three were close beside the cart, and quite unconscious of their coming fate. I have often thought of that scene since. It was something so strange to know what was going to happen, and to see these men coming so surely into the trap—possessed, apparently, of their full power of will, yet utterly ignorant that while they seemed to have it all their own way, they were only walking along a line we had chalked out for them—a line that led them to their doom. I have heard some sermons

about what is called predestination, in my time, and often wonder whether One who knows all, sees all, and foredooms all, as we are told, can blame the poor creatures who only do what he knows they must do, what he sees them doing, and what he has previously settled and ordained that they shall do. I have puzzled over this thought very often, but every chaplain I have hitherto asked to explain it to me has only taken me by the hand to lead me further into the fog.

Well, Mr. Warner rode up close, and a fine-looking fellow he was. When within five or six yards of the Mi-Mi they were suddenly and fiercely assailed by a volley of eight or ten shots. Up jumped the horses, kicking and plunging, for they were wounded. Away went Superintendent Warner and Sergeant Keen slap into the bush as fast as their runaway steeds could carry them. Our fellows, to the number of eight or nine, rushed at the cart, and had a sharp tussle with the troopers, who, however, were soon dragged from their horses, and stretched on the ground wounded. Our men hurried to the cart; but at this moment the thundering of a horse's gallop was heard, and Warner came back full tear, having wheeled round as soon as he could pull up his horse. That was an undaunted fellow; for, in spite of the odds against him, he rode up close and fired three shots from his revolver, none daring to approach, as their pieces were not yet reloaded. Luckily, in his flurry, he hit no one, and,

thus disarmed for a time, was compelled to sheer off out of range, and watch the proceedings as a spectator merely—a course which I also followed, lying quiet in the *mi-mi*, as having no desire to be recognised by Mr. Warner in a position he might consider somewhat equivocal.

Meantime, half a dozen of our men proceeded to unload the cart—an operation which they performed in a cool and business-like manner, removing the boxes of treasure, as they took them out of the vehicle, into an adjoining dense and strong scrub. Warner saw this, and seized the opportunity to despatch the sergeant—himself unwounded, though his horse had three bullets in its neck—to a government station at Mi-Mi, three miles off, requesting help; then the stalwart superintendent actually followed the six thieves who had made off with the gold. In this he was more bold than wise, for hardly had he reached the skirts of the dense scrub I have mentioned than two or three shots were aimed at him. He returned the fire with another discharge of three shots from his revolver, and then, wisely regarding discretion as the better part of valour, rode off after the sergeant, whose horse, being wounded, might, he feared, drop down exhausted on the road.

Reaching the encampment in safety, he called together the troopers, and summoned the *posse comitatus*, in the shape of a number of diggers, whom he called upon to "aid and assist" in the Queen's name. The

diggers received arms and horses, and following the natural inclination of mankind, set off with alacrity to hunt their brother men. Away started the reinforcement in pursuit of the bushrangers. But the latter declined to receive their visit in such great force, so that when they arrived they found only their wounded men, who had been carefully lifted into the cart by a kind stranger (myself), who was standing by them. I informed the excited multitude that, being out that way, looking after some lost cattle, and, hearing pistol shots, I had drawn towards the place, where I found all the men wounded and stretched on the ground. I had assisted them into the cart, and was now ready to lead them after the audacious thieves.

I thought Warner looked somewhat askance at me; but he dared not say anything, for I was then in high position and universal esteem, although I could see he thought I was directing them the wrong way. The wounded were sent off, and the country scoured for miles round. All that was found was a double-barrelled gun, some pumpkins, and some flour in the hut. In the scrub they came up with four hack horses, but not the gold. This is what I had advised should be done, as they served capitally to mislead. Nothing was found out of this robbery. All the escort party were wounded except the superintendent and the sergeant, as was every horse belonging to them, and even one of those that drew the cart; but this was accidental. As soon as the news spread, all the diggers in the vicinity

turned out, and there were vigorous huntings up, and some cruel executions of old bushrangers, but my party escaped; and satisfied with the proceeds of this little escapade, and not exactly pleased with Mr. Warner's report on the subject, I made up my mind to leave Australia at the earliest opportunity.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

I START FOR HOME TRIUMPHANT.

"Regardless of the sweeping whirlwind's sway,
That, hushed in grim repose, expects its evening prey."

At last came the long-wished-for news of a change of ministry in England; and with it also, to my intense relief, tidings of the death of the late Home Secretary. I applied for permission to go home, and received it by the return mail. To dispose of my property, and re-invest in bills of exchange on London, was no very difficult task, nor very unprofitable. The only point was the finding a market for the immense amount of goods of which I was the holder, as a large capitalist. The system of trade in Australia was then, as now, a very remarkable one, being founded, for the most part, on an ingenious system of robbery, by which the great houses at home were successively victimised to a tremendous extent. Goods were consigned to us, principally, as far as I could see, for the purpose of drawing on the bills of lading. These, on arrival, were

sold for what they would fetch, we always, on our side, taking care to purchase them among ourselves at our own settled prices; having a private "knocker in" of our own afterwards, against the London and Liverpool consignors, according to the fashion of the brokers at furniture sales in London. Hence, on the arrival of a cargo, we could glut the market against it, and command the prices to suit ourselves. I suppose it answered their purpose in England, for they kept on sending us goods. My banking experience gave me an insight into the meaning of this; and I set it down as a readier means of discounting on the other side, the losses abroad being, in fact, so much per cent. paid for the use of the ready money at home. The amount of business carried on in this way is something wonderful to the uninitiated, and herein lies the secret of those occasional Panics which occur every now and then, like thunder-storms, to clear the commercial atmosphere.

It is all thievery from beginning to end; but the loss is divided infinitesimally, the hard-working classes being those who bear the loss in the end. Sixpence a week off wages brings everything to the level again, and the ship once righted, all sail is set once more, and the voyage recommences at a spanking rate.

However, I got well out of it, all things considered, and looked out for a ship to convey us home—myself, my wife, and our four children. We found one in the *Royal Martha*, a noble three-masted screw clipper, with

three poop cabins, and a deck that measured, from the inner part of the main stem to the fore part of the stern-post aloft, 306 feet, and 40 feet in breadth, the depth in her hold being, at midships, 26 feet. She was a noble vessel. Her captain was Mr. Thomas Taylor, as fine a seaman as ever stepped. She carried a precious cargo of wool, sheepskins, and gold, and had on board, including my own family, 375 passengers and 112 crew. We left Melbourne on the 26th of August, and have every reason to be satisfied with our ship, in which I am now closing these "Confessions," though she has some drawbacks and peculiarities that make us occasionally uneasy. At sea, with a good breeze on her quarter, which is evidently her best sailing point, she is the finest sailer I ever saw. We passed everything we came up with. I have known her to sail eighteen knots an hour (equal to twenty miles), and yet go steadily through the water; indeed, her masts and spars, though rather heavy to look at, were so nicely balanced and proportioned, that for half an hour she would almost steer herself, under sail, without the helm being touched; but in very rough weather, with a head wind, she laboured very much, and shipped a great deal of water, which made her a very uncomfortable ship for passengers, especially the third class. I have seen the water knee-deep between decks, and in sloppy, wet weather the main deck always leaks, which I suppose to be from the working and straining of the ship. Sometimes, too, she will vibrate

from bow to stern like a fishing-rod; and when pressed forward by much sail, I fancy I can hear the rivets (for she is an iron-built ship) rattle in her side-plates. Once I was nearly washed overboard by a huge wave, which broke upon the deck with a heavy "thud" of many tons of water. A young fellow, a first-class passenger, saved me by jumping right into the water, and seizing me as I was being washed into the lee scuppers. I took very much to this young man afterwards, and by degrees we became so intimate that he told me his story.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE GOOD FORTUNE OF BAD LUCK.

"Judge not a man by the cost of his clothing,
Unheeding the life-path that he may pursue,
Or oft you 'll admire a heart that needs loathing,
And fail to give honour where honour is due.
The palm may be hard, and the fingers stiff-jointed,
The coat may be tattered, the cheek worn with tears,
But greater than kings are Labour's anointed,
And you can't judge a man by the coat he wears."

Poems by JOHN BEDFORD LENO.

"I WAS not always a tailor, nor a publican; you know I have been a convict, but I never was a forger; and I was always an innocent, honest man (why do you laugh?), and once I was a clerk. Ah! it was hard working and poor living was my business. I was clerk in a Detective Office. My master was a sharp, keen fellow—a piercer and a skinner. He could not be an attorney himself, from some early rascality of his own, immaturely discovered. So he kept a poor cripple of an attorney in a garret upstairs, and fleeced people

in his name. Oh! a rare sharp chap was my master, Loftus Wiggles. Like the man, who because he kept a monkey, thought he ought also to have a bull-dog, Loftus Wiggles kept a detective, as well as an attorney; and old Pepper, whom the police now began to look after themselves, played lion occasionally to Wiggles's jackal, and *vice versâ*. Together they set up a 'Commercial Agency' in a by-court near the Minories; but commercial men would not have Wiggles, and could not stomach Pepper, so that dodge failed. Then Wiggles discounted, and his monkey attorney sued; but Pepper spent the money, and even the suing amounted to little more than shearing the pigs; for the miserable debtors squeaked so, and were such very poor wretches, that the three—Wiggles, Pepper, and Shorn—could not get half a living out of them. I am afraid Pepper would have had to find himself out, and Shorn have locked up Wiggles, and gone through the Insolvent Court himself, if it had not been for a lucky crim. con. that set Pepper on the look-out for a rich old fool, and exhibited his genius for swearing through a key-hole. Things began to look better. Wiggles started a cheque-book, opened a Detective Office, and hired a clerk. That was me.

"What a wretched life I had of penury and starvation! A cat in a church could scarcely be as lean. I was running about from morning to night, and watching through the evening at corners of streets for some person or another. And the poor women, too! Wiggles

Wiggles was great in running them to earth in their little peccadilloes, and working nods and winks into crim-cons. These chaps always ran the women hard, because they could never turn round and bite—the men sometimes did. The fair sex—poor things!—used to flutter about, and finally fall into our snares like bewildered pheasants bush-netted with lamps at night. Sometimes we made the situations for them—that is, master and Pepper did—and it was funny, indeed, to see the people come together, and be caught together, that had never been together before, perhaps did not know each other, did not come to meet each other, but were made to happen to be in the same room by some clever contrivance of ours; and there was Pepper to swear he saw them together, and Shorn to swear he saw them go into some suspicious place, separate, and come out together. Ah! there were some piteous scenes then, and more than one tragedy that I could tell you of, resulting out of our manufacturing crim. cons. Not that it was always so. O no! not at all. Sometimes the parties on both sides made it all right with one another, and each gave the other evidence. I have known the Honourable Jack Ruff receive a cheque for a couple of hundred from Mr. Gregory Limpback's solicitor, to enable him to slip over from Boulogne and bolt back with Mrs. Limpback. But this is not the story I have got to tell you.

"One day, being very tired after office hours, I had turned into the parlour of a quiet public-house, the

Crown, in Museum Street, and it being the mackerel season, and that a fish I was very partial to, I ordered one boiled for my dinner, and told the waiter to bring me a pint of bitter beer—an unusual luxury; but some gent, whose discharge I had carried to Fastman's lock-up, in Cursed Street, had given me half-a-crown for my trouble, and with that I had determined to enjoy myself, and reflect over a quiet pipe in what way I might extricate myself from my present unsavoury employment, and at any rate earn sufficient to make three full meals in the week, besides keeping a decent coat on my back.

"Pondering on these things, I took very little notice of a fast-looking young gentleman who came into the room with a cigar in his mouth, and without proffering an apology or excuse for the rudeness, continued to smoke, although he could see, from the preparations on the table, that my dinner was just coming up. At last entered the waiter with my mackerel—a fine fish, nobly boiled, with parsley and butter, and some new potatoes, smoking hot, and larded with fresh butter. It was a feast for an emperor! I drew my chair to the table, and began to help myself. Suddenly the young fellow seized my arm,—just as I was about to cut the fish in half.

"'Good gracious, sir,' said he, in a tone of loud remonstrance, 'what barbarism is this? Cut a mackerel across! Permit me, sir,—one moment.'

"So saying, he took the knife and fork from my

reluctant grasp, and split the fish dexterously from head to tail, dividing it into two pieces.

"'There, sir,' said he; 'that is the way to separate a mackerel. By your clumsy method you were about to lose the true flavour of the fish.'

"'Pon my word, sir,' said I, 'you are very obliging; but don't you think I might be left to eat my dinner after my own fashion?'

"'Quite right, sir,' replied the fast young man, very glibly, 'quite right; but those who know are bound to impart their knowledge. I am rather an eccentric fellow, as you see. Now don't,—pray don't' (seeing I was just applying the jug of bitter beer to my lips); 'you spoil the fish—lose all taste—don't, *pray* don't!'

"Here he got so warm at my persisting, that he placed his hand on the jug, and on my turning my head on one side with some haste and anger at such flagrant impertinence, the beer was upset between us, and flowed all over the dish containing the mackerel, mixing with the parsley and butter, and totally spoiling my expected treat.

"I jumped up furious with wrath, and, I am ashamed to say, I struck at him.

"He parried the blow; and then, with a pacifying gesture, endeavoured to appease me with a profusion of apologies, and every sign of real regret at having occasioned me such an annoyance. At last I began to be mollified, and he ordered in a pint of sherry, of which I was persuaded to partake, at his expense.

"I called in the waiter, and was about to pay for the dinner I had not eaten, and go away, not having enough to pay for another, when the stranger's eye caught mine; and, with a good-natured smile, he said,—

"'Ah! I see how it is; but you shall not be the loser. Here, sir, is a five-pound note; pay for the dinner and what I have had, out of it, and do me the favour to come and dine with me at my chambers in Lyon's Inn: my dinner is just ready, and I was on my way home when an accidental circumstance brought me in to this house.'

"I did not refuse, as you may suppose; and after finishing the sherry and smoking a cigar together, during which interval I found the young stranger quite a gentleman in mind and language, though rather gay and eccentric in his mode of dealing with some subjects, I paid the bill, handed him over his change, out of which he gave the waiter half-a-crown, and we started off.

"If you know much of London, you will remember that we had to pass Moses' great shop at the corner of New Oxford Street, on our way to Lyon's Inn, coming out of Museum Street. At this window my young friend made a dead halt, and glancing first at the handsome suits in the window, and then at my poor seedy surtout, said,—

"'Well, my dear sir, if you would not be affronted, I can't help observing that my people will stare at you when we go in. Now, would you mind—pray don't be

offended at what I say—stepping in and buying another coat for yourself? or perhaps you know some other tailor you would prefer? I mean, of course, at my expense.'

"To be brief, I humoured his little petty vanity so far as to accompany him to my own tailor, or rather an acquaintance to whom I wished to give the turn, whose shop was just near the corner of Long Acre. Here I bought a coat for thirty shillings—it was a paletot—and gave the stranger change for the five-pound note he so generously gave me. But it happened as I had more than expected. No sooner was I fitted with a coat than the contrast between that shining new garb and my brown old hat became perfectly ludicrous. The stranger surveyed me from top to toe.

"'Pardon me, my dear sir,' he said, 'but I am more pained than you can suppose: what hitherto was only a joke is now becoming serious. I can perceive honesty, and respectability, and decent pride struggling against small means. I would not have offended you, as I unintentionally did, for worlds. Permit me to make the *amende honorable* by presenting you with a new hat.'

"I tried to disclaim this new gift, but his good nature and politeness got the best of the friendly contest, and I stepped into the next shop, which was a hatter's, while he waited outside. This made a hole of sixteen shillings in another five-pound note; and when, on our reaching the Strand, he wished me to buy some gloves and a handkerchief, I positively refused

until, taking out of his pocket a roll of notes, he showed me that money with him was no object, assuring me that he had just that day received a large legacy from the lawyer under his uncle's will, and was about to set out on his travels the next morning. I yielded again, and smartened myself up with a silk necktie, a cambric pocket-handkerchief, brown kid gloves, and a new shirt, receiving only three pounds ten out of the last note for five pounds.

"What passed at the stranger's chambers at Lyon's Inn—handsome rooms, plainly furnished, but with grand attendance, a sumptuous dinner, and a profusion of fine wines—I can scarcely recount. We drank, we toasted, we grew jolly and sang, and finally sallied out to 'beat the rounds,' as my young patron expressed it. I paid for everything that night, and treated every one, being liberally supplied with money by the stranger, who, whenever I showed signs of hesitation, pushed another 'fiver,' as he called it, into my hand, and laughed at my anxiety to give him back the change. The last I remember was an oyster-shop, a café, and a saloon in the Haymarket. On the next morning I found myself fast asleep in the first-class waiting-room of the South Western Railway, where it appears I had arrived, very noisy, in a cab at seven o'clock, to take leave of my friend on his departure for Southampton by the first train, *en route* for the West Indies, by the packet that started instantly on the arrival of the train.

"I was late at Wiggles's that morning, and received

a strong rebuke, but was too sleepy and exhausted to care much for it. I had a message to convey to Camden Town about twelve o'clock, and as I was returning to the office from delivering it, about half-past one, having contrived to drop in at home and snap a bit of dinner with my dear old mother, I was met, rather to my surprise, just at the top of Burton Crescent, by Pepper himself.

"'Glad to see you, Master Deverell,' said he—an unusual condescension on his part.

"'Thanking you, sir,' I replied, 'I am going back to the office as fast as I can.'

"'But you can't go,' said he.

"'Why?' asked I, supposing he was about to change my road by despatching me on a different errand.

"'BECAUSE I WANT YOU FOR FORGERY,' was his answer.

"He spoke in a very low voice, but very distinctly. Every word fell on my heart like the knell of doom. Well aware what a scoundrel he was, and with whom connected, I felt that some net was woven around me, innocent as I was, from which it was hopeless to attempt escape. I knew I had not done anything that could anyhow be perverted into wrong or crime. Pepper had said he must arrest me for forgery, and I knew the man too well not to know all was over with me in this life.

"The first effect upon me, I well remember, was

similar to that of a musket-ball or pistol-shot in a man's heart—a strong spasmodic action of the great vital muscle. I leaped up in the air, then turned round, and though I did not quite fall, came staggering to the ground, and tottered against Pepper's shoulder.

"'Come, my lad,' said he, 'you are but a young 'un yet; but you did it cleverly, I must say. Wiggles said he never thought you had so much in you, and Shorn even now won't believe it. You must have made a good swag out of the one night's work.'

"'What *do* you mean?' asked I.

"'Oh! if that 's your little game,' retorted Pepper, 'I suppose you 'll keep it all to yourself; so I had better take you before the beak at once.'

"'What am I arrested for, Mr. Pepper? and where 's your warrant?'

"'Now, don't come that dodge, Mr. Deverell, with me,' said Pepper, looking quite affronted, and more than half puzzled; 'you are the man that 's wanted, so come along. You don't want these?' pointing to a pair of handcuffs.

"'If you attempt to handcuff me I will crack your skull, Mr. Pepper,' I replied, for I was getting savage. 'Tell me what I am arrested for, and I will submit quietly.'

"'Nothing more nor less than passing forged five-pound notes. You must have made a good swag last night. We have four cases against you already, besides others that will turn up by the time I get back to the

office. I should advise you to put your defence in Shorn's hands, and we will do the best for you afterwards, as it will be of no use denying the facts now; the evidence is too strong.'

"'In the name of heaven, what do you mean by all this, Mr. Pepper? I have done nothing.'

"'Of course you have not, my boy. I don't want you to say otherwise to me, you know; but you had better tell the truth to Wiggles, and he may push you through.'

"'I have got nothing to tell. Of what am I accused?'

"'Well, as you must soon know, I may as well tell you. The charge I shall take you on is for forging Bank-of-England notes; but you will only be tried for uttering, as far as I can see at present. Last night you put off a lot of forged notes, and four of them are already in my hands.'

"The truth flashed upon me in a moment. My gay, eccentric friend had made use of me to utter these notes.

"'It must be a mistake,' I said; 'I can account for them all.'

"'So much the better,' replied Pepper; 'but I give you warning now, that all you tell me will be used against you.'

"I found I had done Pepper and Wiggles injustice. It was not a planned thing by them. An ordinary villain had deceived me, as many had been deceived

before. I insisted on telling Pepper all; but he only shook his head.

"'Had I got any money?'

"'Not five shillings.'

"'Then you are a flat, indeed, if that is true.'

"To be brief, I was taken to the police office, where I was charged with forgery, and told my story.

"They discredited it, but sent to Lyon's Inn, where they found such a person as I described had taken furnished chambers, but that his time had expired, on due notice, and he had vacated his rooms the previous night. There was no clue to him. No such person had boarded the West India packet, and a party such as I described had got out at Basingstoke, where all trace of him was lost.

"The evidence was too strong and circumstantial to be resisted. I was sent to prison, tried, and, it being proved on the trial that I had on that night got rid of ten five-pound notes and three twenties, on all of which I had written my own name and address (the only point that told in my favour, and might have done me some good if I could have afforded a fee for counsel to enforce it), I was convicted and sentenced to transportation.

"I must do Wiggles and Pepper the justice to say they stood my friends to the last; both gave me an excellent character, and Pepper used his interest to get me a few favours from the prison authorities. The advice he gave me, on parting to go to the jail, I strictly followed.

"'Always go to prayers, my boy, sing as loud as you can; never swear; never grumble; don't complain; don't tell tales; talk as little as you can; read anything you can get; be always wanting to see the chaplain; cough as much as you can before the surgeon; be always civil; take no notice of the governor (who has too many such acquaintances); write to your mother, and say you are thankful and grateful, and look upon prison as a short way to religion and righteousness; and you will ultimately be all right, besides being as comfortable as possible for the present. If you are innocent, stick to it; if not, hold your tongue and make the best of everything. Don't trust any fellow-prisoner, and thank your stars you didn't live twenty years ago, when you would have been hanged out of hand.'

"I followed this advice, and profited by it. In two years I was transported, with 'an excellent character from my last place;' in the third I obtained a ticket of leave in Australia, and was put to a good master; in the fourth I got a free ticket, and set up in business for myself as a tailor, or rather a vendor of ready-made clothes; for my friend in Long Acre, who had appeared at first against me, and was the original cause of my detection and apprehension by Pepper, became convinced of my innocence, and forwarded over to me a consignment of clothes for sale. Among these was a bundle of the identical paletots that proved my ruin. 'Out of evil comes good,' thought I to myself. 'As you have ruined me, you shall make me.' So, re-

membering the great Regent Street dodge, I christened these coats the 'Deverell Paletot,' and they went off like wildfire. One day an elderly gentleman came into my shop to buy one—it was almost the last—and I had just written off for five hundred more to be shipped immediately. As he looked at it, I observed him gazing upon myself with a scrutinising eye, as if to take my measure in place of the coat.

"'You call these little coats a queer name, governor,' said he.

"'I call them after myself, sir—my own invention, sir—the prettiest thing, sir, out of England—the Deverell paletot!'

"'Then your name is Deverell, is it?'

"'Certainly, sir—Martin Deverell.'

"'Indeed!' said he. 'Well, it's of no consequence, I suppose, what you call a coat, if it fit.'

"'Try it on, sir; the paletot is unfailing in adapting itself to every figure.'

"'—— the figure!' said he, abruptly and emphatically. 'I am not to be gammoned by such nonsense. Coats are to cover backs, not figures. No, I shall not try it on, (seeing me advance forward); 'but do you bring it to me yourself down to the Bristol Mail after you have shut up your shop, and ask for me, Mr. Henry Martin. They will show you into my back parlour, and there we will talk about it.'

"I thanked my rumbustical customer, whom I now recognised as the richest man in Melbourne, present

company always excepted" (this with a bow to myself, the Hon. John Horsleydown), "and we parted.

"I was detained half an hour later than usual before I could close my shop that evening, and, in the hurry of so much ready-money business, had almost forgotten my new customer, when a messenger came running up to summon me, immediately.

"'Mr. Martin wants his coat, and you are to bring it directly; and I advise you to come precious quick, for the bos (master) is making a great fuss, and he doesn't stand very particular.'

"I packed up the paletot, and was soon at the Bristol Mail. It was the largest public-house in Melbourne—a flaring, staring, grand gin palace, all gilding, glass, and gas-light. The bar was full of diggers and roughs of all kinds; for the gold fields were then newly discovered, and drinking was the only luxury that the first discoverers could procure. I remember there were three wedding parties standing before the bar—the men dressed like navvies; the brides in the very height of the newest Parisian fashions, according to the pictures you see of them in magazines. Such silks, and muslins, and bonnets, and kid gloves, with such thick legs, fat figures, blowzy brown faces, and red hands, and bony wrists, and hard elbows! The brides were quarrelling on one side of their mouths, and simpering on the other; the men were swearing and drinking 'shandy-gaff,' made out of pale ale and champagne, at a guinea a bottle. Nay, more, these parties

had been six times up and down the town in a carriage, treating every one they could get to drink with them everywhere, and were now on their way homewards, celebrating their nuptial odes in most vociferous melodies—solos of the most melancholy and affecting character being chorused with a unanimous 'tol de rol.' I passed through these groups into the back parlour, where I found Mr. Martin with a newspaper and a bottle of wine, awaiting my arrival evidently with some impatience.

"'So you have come at last, sir?'

"I apologised for the delay, and immediately commenced unpacking the coat.

"'—— the coat!' said he.

"I was not over gratified at such a reception, and, taking up my hat, said,—

"'Oh! very well, Mr. Martin; —— the coat, then,' and was about to retire.

"'Don't be a fool; sit down; take a glass of wine—I warrant it good, the best in this part of the world. I have it direct from Chillingworth's, near the Tower of London, and they keep an acre of it bottled and always ready for me. But that's not to the purpose, and wine so good as that should need no bush. Your name, young man, is——'

"'Martin Deverell, sir, at your service.'

"'A strange name that! Where might you have got it?'

"'It is my own, and was my father's before me.'

"'Your father's, eh? But what was your mother's?'

"'Emma Carew. She was one of the Careys of Repton, in Derbyshire.'

"'They call them Crews, young man,' said Mr. Martin, advancing, and placing his hand on my shoulder; 'And what brought you to this place?'

"'I was accused of a crime of which I was not guilty.'

"'Don't say so, boy; don't cry craven, as they all do. Out with it, lad, do, and die! Stick up for it; never sneak. I am not ashamed of it. I was a convict. I came here in a prison dress, with handcuffs, twenty-five years ago. I was a *lifer*' (this he said with a kind of pride). 'I am now the largest publican, the greatest landholder, and the richest man in the place. Now then, Martin Deverell, guilty or not guilty?'

"'Not guilty, my lord,' said I, humouring his idea, 'though I die for it. As sure as I have an honest mother, and hope to live to see her, I am an innocent and an honest man.'

"'So much the worse,' said the convict. 'It is more respectable, but you have the more to find out and to suffer. Is your mother alive, then, Martin?' and I saw the tears course each other rapidly down the brown, furrowed cheeks of that hard-headed old man.

"'Yes, sir, she lives, Heaven bless her! I heard from her by the last clipper from the old country. She lives, in hope of seeing me once more.'

"'She shall, Martin Deverell, she shall. But have you no other relations—no sister?'

"'Alas, no!'

"'No father?'

"'There you touch upon a tender subject. My father—though my mother never hinted it, yet I have heard—was tried for horse-stealing, which was really the act of a reckless boy in a frolic; but it was made horse-stealing to oblige the squire of our village, who could not catch him for poaching.'

"'And wanted to make love to Emma Carew himself, lad, and so they transported him.'

"'Yes, and he died on the voyage.'

"'And Emma, who was privately married to him before he went away, had a child after his conviction, and you are he?'

"'I am. I never saw my father, who died on the passage out. My mother lived, cherishing his loved memory, and working hard to maintain herself and me until I was old enough to work for her.'

"'Heaven bless you both! I am your father! I never died that way. Some one of the same name did, and those who had me closely watched, hatched up that lie; and thus I heard no more of either of you, and thought myself forgotten and deserted. Poor Emma! your unexplained silence caused mine, and mine confirmed your notion of my death. O dear! O dear! Poor, poor Emma!'

"Here the old man burst into an hysterical flood of tears, which relieved his o'er-fraught feelings. He then went on:—

"'I was knocked about a good deal on my first coming here. Convict masters were always a cruel set to their fellow-convicts. The country was too lonely to run away into, and the natives, then, too numerous. However, I buffeted through by hard work and keeping my temper. My knowledge of horse-breaking stood me in good service. I soon became the most celebrated stockman in the colony, and led my flocks and herds by thousands across the colony from port to port—a great feat in those early times, when people in this part of the world, reckoning it just newly made and half unfinished, thought all was dry sand within, and no water; but I found out some plains and a large river, and at last, when I came to tell the secret as the place increased, I got a sum of money and a large grant of land for the discovery, which made a man of me. So we all went on happily, like Job that you hear of in the Bible—I know your mother taught you to read that, for she was always a good girl—breeding, feeding, and rearing our flocks and herds; until, at last, the gold was found, and the very grass became too valuable to eat, and the water to drink; and we all fell back on the towns, and I bethought myself of the old Bristol Mail, the Quicksilver, that used to run by our door in the old village—and put it up for a sign, and sold drink at any price to the diggers, mad with unearned money, and their pockets full of gold. And this grew, and everything else grew, and land became worth £100 a foot; and I sold most of mine in and about the town, and went on

building houses on the rest, and this grand stone public-house, or hotel, as you may call it, which it is; and here I am, Martin Deverell, at this moment, the richest man in Melbourne, and your father; and you shall have it all, and we will go home to see mother; so shut up your shop at once—to-morrow—and look out for a ship.'

"And so it happened. Father went home a year ago, leaving me to collect and sell his property by degrees, as there was so much of it, that to do so all at once would have flooded the market and knocked down prices. I have remitted home £200,000, and have £100,000 on board, the principal part in my belt; so speed the good ship, fair wind! and hey for the west countrie!"

SPEED THE GOOD SHIP!

Away! away she went! before the wind, quivering under it from stem to stern like a fishing-rod. We were silent for a moment as the story ended, when a manly voice was heard. It was poor Frederick Foster's, the gay young midshipman. An orphan he was, poor fellow! and heedless as the wind. He sang with mellow swell,—

> "The White Squall dances along the wave,
> And the bark is gulfed in an ocean grave!"

In an ocean grave!

CHAPTER XL.

THE INNOCENT CONVICT.

"The difference is too nice
Where ends the Virtue or begins the Vice."

POPE.

THIS story of Martin Deverell set me thinking. I had observed more than one case of convicts suffering what is now almost the extreme penalty of the law, who were notoriously—that is to say, notoriously among their own class—innocent of any offence that deserved such punishment; and I could see plainly that the very possibility of innocence, and the infliction of great punishments for small offences, tended to elevate the real criminal, by enabling him to speak of the unfairness and injustice of the law. More than half of the convicts who came from rural districts dated their first convictions from poaching—a fertile source of education in crime, and, as far as I can see, little other than a method by which the great landholders preserve their partridges and pheasants at the expense of the counties, and

a risk of nurturing the discontent and rousing the bad passions of their poorer neighbours. Indeed, though my moneyed position and education always elevated me above the vulgar cant of abusing our aristocracy, I can't help observing that, over the rural population, the great landholders undoubtedly exercise exactly that species of tyranny, for employing which against their subjects an East India Director once explained to me that the Ameers of Scinde were deposed from sovereign power, and their country taken away from them, by that highly moral and respectable body of—appropriators—the late Honourable East India Company.

Be that as it may, those who remember the case of the solicitor Barber, who suffered a martyrdom that the Unclaimed Dividends in the Bank of England might not be again disturbed by persons making out claims to them, can have little doubt that innocent persons are very often found guilty, when a strong purse and a powerful influence are brought to bear against them.

I met an old man in Australia, formerly a convict, then a well-to-do agriculturist, and he told me a strange story of this character in connection with his own history.

Charles Spenser—that was his name—while a gay, dashing young man, had married a widow, whose sole possession was a life-interest in £80,000, bequeathed to her by her first husband. This provided a handsome income, upon which they both enjoyed themselves for three years, thoughtless of the future; when, on a sudden, Mrs. Spenser was carried off by fever, unex-

pectedly following on a cold, caught at a *fête champêtre* at Twickenham one wet summer's afternoon.

Mr. Spenser's grief at the loss of his young and beautiful wife had scarcely subsided, when he was painfully aroused to the difficulty of his situation. Without means or a profession, with expensive habits and numerous acquaintance, he had not a five-pound note belonging to him. All died with his wife—even the house in which they lived, and the furniture, were hers but for life.

Like a man of sense, he set himself vigorously to work, and, having been originally articled to a solicitor, completed the course of three years, and entered into practice as an attorney.

The branch of the profession which he followed, as most convenient and ready, brought him into connection with the prisons of the metropolis; and, as he made himself remarkable by conducting a species of business, usually disreputable, in a respectable manner, the authorities of those establishments began gradually to take favourable notice of him.

Somehow or other, however, he found this style of business not sufficiently profitable, and was glad to accept a position which the governor of one of the Debtors' Prisons offered him.

It was about the period of the threatened invasion of England by the Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, when, as an army was really hovering on the opposite coast, and apparently watching only an opportunity to swoop down

upon our coasts, the nation was aroused, and every man flew to arms. Spenser was among the first to respond to the call of his country, and displayed so much energy and activity in this volunteer movement, that Governor Brown and his patron, Mr. Alderman Poppy, gladly appointed him to the secretaryship of a brigade of Volunteers, of which Governor Brown was to be Lieutenant-Colonel, and Alderman Poppy the Commander in Chief, or something of that kind.

Poor Spenser undertook the office, worked hard, wrote much, and set the affair going; gave dinners, made speeches, and originated subscriptions, which he was instructed to receive, and from which, whenever money was required for the purposes of the corps, he drew such amounts as were requisite for the purpose of carrying on the affair.

Now it happened, unfortunately, that Governor Brown was rather a fine-looking fellow, and a great favourite amongst the ladies. Spenser also, unluckily for himself, became the Governor's confidant and companion in one or two little escapades, and, amongst others, in a rather delicate affair about a diamond ring presented to Governor Brown by a lady, but which he found it necessary, for the satisfaction of Mrs. Brown, before he could venture to wear it, should be presumed to be a present from his friend Charles Spenser, who, therefore, at his request, wrote a letter to him to that effect. I can hardly see how this diamond ring *can* have had anything to do with what followed; but ac-

cording to Spenser's story—and I only give it as he told it to me—this diamond ring was the cause of his being transported. He knew too much, and it was necessary to get him out of the way.

Now, General and Alderman Poppy was a fussy little fellow, and it so happened that one day he took to overhauling the accounts—a matter which did not result very greatly to his satisfaction; for he, being a business man, soon perceived that everything was in a muddle—that sums had been paid and not properly entered, and, in some instances, expended without being entered at all. This vexed him, and he found fault with Spenser, who was careless in money matters; and, who, knowing he had spent all he had received in nothing but the business of the corps, became irritated, and answered the great little man petulantly.

Upon this General and Alderman Poppy demanded an account categorically; which being refused, he forthwith applied to the Lord Mayor, took out a warrant, seized Spenser's papers, and locked him up in a criminal prison.

Here was a miserable complication, for the poor fellow was friendless and with scanty means. The Alderman went stolidly on, and Brown was obliged to side with him, or resign his place. Spenser, like a man of honour, would not turn upon Brown, so the wretched affair took its course; and, although Spenser was subsequently enabled to prove that he had only expended a score of pounds over and above the three or four hundred

allowed him by vote for preliminary expenses—a small sum indeed under such circumstances, and quite within the possibility of mistake—the jury on the trial, acting on General Poppy's and Colonel Brown's evidence and the turn given by the latter, who, having gone so far, thought it better that Spenser should be got quite out of the way, found him guilty; whereupon the judge, not having the true state of the case explained to him by counsel, who had thrown up the briefs the previous night, because poor Spenser could not pay their fees, sentenced the poor fellow to some years of penal servitude.

He, who was really as innocent as you are, fell fainting in the dock on hearing the sentence, and only recovered in the Penitentiary. Ruined and disgraced, the transportation to Australia came like a blessing to him. There, finally, his good conduct securing his manumission, he recovered his spirits, lived in honour, and accumulated wealth.

Such was the tale Charles Spenser told to me; and he was a man of that character, that I think he would have died rather than tell a lie. He never betrayed his friend Brown, though strongly tempted; nor would he have mentioned the circumstances to me, but that all parties concerned, except himself, had been long since dead. Now, this man appears to me to have suffered unreservedly. He could not designedly have pilfered the money, as he was accused of doing; and if the facts be as he said, his case was a very hard one, and such as, in my opinion, ought to have had more attention from

his brother Volunteers than it seems at the time to have received.

In regard to the alleged utterance of forged notes by my young friend, Martin Deverell, his was by no means a singular instance. The plan I used to follow myself to get rid of stolen notes, by advertising for servants, and sending those who applied for situations on errands to the various banks, to change stray notes and cheques, was adopted from the tradition of a similar method practised by a celebrated old forger, one Peter Darrell, who carried on a thriving trade for many years, always appearing as an old gentleman, although himself a stalwart young fellow. I never came across but one forger in my life, and he was no common person.

Lieutenant Thomas Hollis, the son of a Norfolk clergyman, having received a cadetship through the influence of his father with the Wyndham family, proceeded to India, where he greatly distinguished himself in the Burmese war. For this service he received a pension of £100 a year from the East India Company, with leave of absence, and a further gratuity to defray his expenses, as he was recovering from a severe wound. He returned home, and, immediately on his arrival, married a young lady at Great Grimsby, in Suffolk, to whom he had been attached from his earliest years. Something happened between them which was never explained, that led to his leaving Great Grimsby and his wife behind him; nor was he ever heard of again until about two years afterwards, when a notic

appeared in the public papers that Thomas Hollis, who had been committed to Newgate from Bow Street, for forgery, had committed suicide; and that a letter, addressed to "Mrs. Hollis, 33, Mill Street, Belfast, Ireland," had been found enclosed in another to the governor, naming the place where he had lodged, and requesting the Bow Street magistrates might be informed of it. This letter was as follows:—

"My DEAR WIFE,

"Can any one imagine my feelings while addressing this letter to you? By the time it reaches you the dreadful fate that has befallen me will have been exposed in the public newspapers. I had flattered myself that everything was going on smoothly for my appointment as lieutenant-colonel of Don Pedro's 1st Regiment of Dragoon Guards, when I unfortunately met a man named Beardsworth, a horse-dealer in Birmingham, from whom I purchased a horse with a fifty-pound note, which afterwards proved to be a forgery."

I cannot help stopping here to remark the singular method in which men justify themselves to themselves. Thus Captain Hollis "unfortunately" meets a man named Beardsworth, instead of Beardsworth's "unfortunately" meeting a man named Hollis; and the note "afterwards proved" to be a forgery, in place of actually being a forged note, knowingly handed to Beardsworth by himself. But, to go on with the letter:—

"He followed me to London, caused me to be arrested, and took me to Bow Street, where I was publicly examined before the magistrate and remanded to this place, to give time to the people of the Bank of England and others to prosecute me. I have one great consolation; and that is, that you and my dear children cannot be implicated in my conduct; therefore neither your relations nor the world can with justice reproach you."

His tenderness, poor fellow, for the lady, can only be appreciated by those who know, as I did, that for her sake he had incurred the risk of bigamy — a method of self-sacrifice and devotion, on the part of an intending husband, which the sex hardly seem sufficiently to appreciate; or, at least, their relatives do not, as they usually show themselves too much inclined to interfere uncourteously. This is a delicate point, however; but if a man may marry his wife's sister, I cannot particularly see why there should be any violent objection to his marrying all the rest of his relatives on Adam or Eve's side, either way. The letter of my friend to his second wife went on to say,—

"Fate has decreed that we should behold each other no more. It is a hard task for me to write these last lines. I shall encounter but very few more of the frowns, or taste more of the bitters, which this world produces."

Here followed a very minute description of the articles he had left in his lodgings. He was in the

habit of coming up to London once in the year to receive his dividends and pension, as he said, but in fact to pass off imitation bank-notes sufficient to secure him a comfortable income for the rest of the year. This done, he returned home quietly, by a roundabout road, into a secluded district of Ireland, where he employed himself, during the rest of the year, in manufacturing manure from fish caught and wasted on the coast. His hours of leisure from business were spent in what was supposed to be study, but what was, in reality, the careful manufacture of fresh notes. He was the inventor of an ingenious system of forging, or rather substitution of value, in this portion of the national currency. Hence it happened that among the articles of value at his lodgings in Salisbury Street, Strand, mentioned in the letter alluded to, he enumerated "a genuine five-pound note, and another, originally of the same amount, but the lettering of which had been cut out, and the word 'ten' put instead; and another, with the word 'fifty' inserted, but which had been a ten.

"When you receive this I shall be out of the miseries of this world. You I leave as protectress to those pledges of our mutual affection, our beloved children.

"Your brother or sisters will, I hope, interest themselves in your behalf at the East India House, as also your money in the funds. Employ some professional man about the notes alluded to in my portmanteau: the original pieces of the ten-pound and the five pound

are in the lining of a small lid, which takes down on the top part.

"Adieu for ever, my dear wife! My dear children, accept the last farewell and blessing from your father,

"THOMAS BALHAM HOLLIS."

By this means the captain had carried on a profitable business for some time. Gardiner, the Bow Street officer, who went to Salisbury Street, where the captain had lodged as "Captain Holmes," found ninety pieces of tissue paper ingeniously concealed underneath the lining of the lid of his portmanteau. Upon these the word "fifty" and the figures "50," in imitation of the notes of the Bank of England, were drawn with great accuracy, so that they might be readily substituted for the legitimate amounts in bank-notes of less value. The officer also found the Indian ink, pencil, and pen, with such other apparatus as is necessary for this species of forgery, together with letters and memoranda, showing that the captain must have used his advantages and introductions to an amazing extent in carrying on his traffic. He was a gay and pleasant fellow, was Hollis, and had nearly got me into taking shares in a Fish Manure Company; indeed, I should have done so, had I not made a rule in early life never to trust an Irishman, or have anything to do with Irish business. They all either bounce, blunder, or cheat; generally they do two out of the three, sometimes (not rarely) all three together; and then, to your straight-

forward downright English rogue, the complication becomes confusing; for he does not mind, for his own part, being punished when he is found out; nor does he consider his country injured by an extra round on the mill given to himself; but the Irish have much wit, and a great deal of very fine feelings, which render them unaccountable in the ordinary way.

Poor Hollis, after he had got into Newgate, was always writing and in profound thought, though apparently cool and calm. Of course they took away his knife, and allowed him no weapons; but nevertheless, when Governor Chesterton went round at seven o'clock on the Saturday morning (he had been committed on the Thursday previous), he found his prisoner suspended by the neck, with a silk handkerchief, from a staple in the wall used for hanging up beds: both his hands were found tied with a neckerchief, and brought down under his thighs. Hoare, the turnkey, cut him down; but the poor fellow was quite dead and cold. The jury returned a verdict of *felo de se* (which they would not have done if he had been a colonel in the army, or high sheriff of the county, and not in prison), and the coroner immediately made out a warrant for the interment of the body; and they buried poor Hollis at twelve at night, at Battle Bridge, by torchlight, with a disgusting ceremony of driving a stake through his body, "in the manner ordered by Act of Parliament."

This suicide surprised me much at the time, considering the nerve and firmness of the man; and I

always blamed it, not because it adds a crime (as they say it is) to foolishness by killing yourself to avoid being killed, but because it throws away a chance, since up to the very last moment of being turned off, no one knows what may intervene.

I remember a question of suicide in connection with one of our partners—before I came into the house—of Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co. Mr. Leeds took an active part in the business, and attended in the banking-house almost daily. A series of large transactions had taken place in the house, in connection with foreign funds, and "by order of some of their correspondents" (as was stated in evidence by Mr. Manchester), the house had "applied their moneys" in purchasing foreign stocks. Amongst others, moneys belonging to Sir Thomas Morton and Co. had been lent (query expended?) on various securities (that is, time bargains had been made with borrowed money, held in trust); and the house was answerable for those moneys, and the changes in the value of stocks and securities, whether the market rose or fell. Mr. Leeds was the principal party in working these speculations; and somehow or other—as you will remember to have been the case with Fountleroy in the large building speculations in which that house was engaged—he became the party personally responsible; and to him some £40,000 of the money held for Sir Thomas Morton had been advanced, on the security of £50,000 French four per cents. But these £50,000 French four per

cents., besides being liable for £40,000 to Sir Thomas Morton's money, were actually held and in the hands —how they got there I could never make out—of Messrs. Samuels and Goldsmicht, nothing being left in the box that should have held Morton's securities, so far as the French four per cents. were concerned, but a memorandum written by Mr. Leeds: "The French four per cents. certificates in Messrs. Samuels and Goldsmicht's hands are the property of Sir Thomas Morton and Co., to whom, or to some person on their behalf, deliver them in my absence."

One afternoon came an awful letter, express, borne by a panting, travel-stained, saddle-bumped, courier, direct from Paris, to say there had been a Revolution the day previous. Down went the French funds seven per cent., with every prospect of being worse. Charles X. was nowhere, and Europe in a blaze.

Mr. Leeds went home that evening "in his usual health and spirits" (so Mr. Manchester gave evidence), leaving word that as he had been summoned on a special jury for the following day, he might not be able to come to the counting-house. His home was at Hornsey; but as the painters were putting a finishing touch to it, his family (a wife and eight children, one of them a baby) were at Brighton. He arrived at home at nine o'clock in the evening, and declined to partake of a dinner that was prepared for him, but asked for a biscuit. He told his valet not to call him in the morning, as he would ring if he wanted him.

About twelve o'clock that night his valet awoke at some noise he heard, and saw his master going upstairs in his shirt from the dining-room, who asked him how he came to be out so late, and went upstairs to his bedroom, and got into bed before the man, who followed him up, had entered the room. All was quiet until half-past nine in the morning, when the bell rang, and the valet took up hot water to the door, but left it outside, as the door was not opened. There it remained. The painters, while engaged at their work, thought they heard groans; but the valet would not have the door forced until eleven o'clock, after one of the men, looking through it, had seen Mr. Leeds lying over on his side with his chest heaving violently; then the door was forced open, but the poor gentleman was dead. The surgeons said it was the rupture of a blood-vessel in the stomach that had caused this sudden decease. The valet afterwards found a piece of blue paper and a piece of red paper in the library, and a window open, from which a bottle might have been thrown. Half a dozen doctors of eminence disagreed about symptoms and smells; but the jury who tried the case very properly gave a verdict for the widow and children, without requiring the judge to sum up, and the insurance office, who disputed his life policy, had £10,000 to pay, which was a good thing for the family. Chester, Manchester, Leeds, and Co., paid the money to Sir Thomas Morton and Co.; and young Mr. Leeds succeeded to his father's share in the part-

nership. That's the way they behave to each other in the City; and I am sure no man, that is a man, can find fault with them. Poor Mr. Leeds! he was a man of great genius. I recollect his obtaining a patent—and selling it, too, for £100,000 to a company—for a new plan of conveying the mails: that was before the railways and the electric telegraph. His project was the erection of pillars along each line of road, which pillars were to be connected by inclined wires or iron rods. Along these iron rods the letters, inclosed in cylinders attached to the rods by rings, were to slide. Persons stationed on these columns were to forward the cylinders from each point, after having extracted the contents belonging to their own station. In this manner he and another clever old gentleman, whose name I forget—only I remember he was very great in doing long division sums by machinery, and had a violent objection to barrel organs—calculated that a letter might be sent (from pillar to post) to the farthest limits of the land in the course of a very small portion of time—from London to York, probably, in an hour or two. In the absence of pillars, it was suggested, I remember, "that church steeples, properly selected, might answer the purpose; and in London the churches might be used for the circulation of the (then) twopenny post."

That was a clever project certainly; and only equal to another of the same period, by which a tunnel was to be hollowed out from the other side of London

Bridge to Brighton, and from it the air was to be exhausted by steam pumps. Passengers and parcels were then to be sealed up in a carriage, and blown into Brighton, or *vice versâ*. I do not remember why this plan did not come off; I suppose the railways put an end to the scheme; but I know that some millions were afterwards wasted in an atmospheric railway, in which the main feature was stopping a hole with yellow wax, and then cutting through it with a train, which had afterwards to seal it up again behind, as it progressed forward. The wax, however, was very obstinate, and was always in one condition or the other—either it was too hot to harden, or too cold to melt, and so the trains came to a stand-still. Nothing melted properly but the money.

CHAPTER XLI.

A LAWYER IN A TRAP.

"Will the friend pass my dwelling and forget?"
MRS. HEMANS.

I HAVE spoken about the conviction of innocent men; but this is nothing to what the law sometimes does in its generous moods, when it lets off those who are not innocent.

One fine afternoon in May one Mr. Wych, a reputable tradesman in Mile-end New Town, was waited upon by a respectable-looking elderly gentleman, who gave his name as James Edwards, and represented himself to be "a professor and teacher of music." Mr. Edwards appeared to be partially, if not totally, blind, and was led by a young lad—a circumstance which, above all others, tended to throw Mr. Wych off his guard in dealing with him. The object of Mr. Edwards's call upon Mr. Wych was the hiring of a house he had to let in York Street, Commercial Road. Mr. James

Edwards was provided with references to a Mr. Hill, near the West India Docks, and that worthy baker, on being called upon in due course, guaranteed the respectability of Mr. James Edwards, representing him to be a respectable man, and a teacher of music, and adding that he had instructed in that delightful art several members of Mr. Hill's own family. So far so good; and Mr. Wych, consequently, handed over to Mr. James Edwards, without demur or doubt, the key of the house in York Street, Commercial Road.

All this constituted a very simple, straightforward, and every-day transaction. Now for what came of it.

In the quiet town of Bishop's Stortford, there happened to reside one Mr. Gee, a decent, well-to-do solicitor, in considerable local practice, who, having some large sums of money belonging to various rich Essex clients lying in his hands, was in the habit of advancing them on the security of landed property in the Eastern Counties. In consequence of receiving a letter from a person signing himself William Heath, relative to the disposal of some property, Mr. Gee arranged to meet Mr. Heath at the Bull Inn, Aldgate, on the 5th of May, at one o'clock in the afternoon. With the commendable punctuality of a man of business, Mr. Gee duly arrived to his appointment, but Mr. Heath did not; and Mr. Gee, after partaking of a pint of wine, to pass away the time and solace his disappointment, was preparing to make his departure, when a messenger arrived, bearing a letter from Mr. Heath

which assigned a proper excuse for his failure in keeping his appointment, and requested Mr. Gee's presence at a house in York Street, Commercial Road. The messenger said he had a cab waiting, and Mr. Gee, suspecting no harm (as how should he—being "taken on the hop," as we call it?), got into the vehicle, and was driven to No. 27, York Street, Commercial Road.

On getting out of the cab and entering the house, Mr. Gee was met in the passage by a man, who, addressing him, said his brother was then at breakfast in the kitchen, and hoped he would have no objection to go there to him, as he wished particularly to see and speak with him.

By this time the door was closed, and the cab discharged. Mr. Gee naturally proceeded forwards up the passage; but just as he was about to descend the stairs leading to the kitchen, the astonished lawyer was laid hold of by three fellows—the person who delivered him the letter at the Bull Inn, the man who had asked him to go to the kitchen, and a third person. All three assisted in dragging him down head foremost, unable as he was to resist from his position, into a back kitchen, and thence into a kind of den, where they forced him on to a seat, and not only chained him from behind, but fastened his feet tightly to the flooring by means of very strong cords, so that he could scarcely move his person, hands, or feet.

You can judge the alarm of the unfortunate Essex solicitor in this position. There was not a glimpse of

hope for him. All his knowledge of law was, in this condition, of no avail to him. Writs, judgments, actions, trials, even great *habeas corpus* itself, were useless!

But they beat themselves. They were too clever. They knew too much; for, having accomplished all this, and got the man quite under their hands, how do you think they went to work? Why, just as if they were lawyers instead of thieves! One of the party represented himself as the brother of a certain client of Mr. Gee's, named Canning—at that word hope revived in Mr. Gee's breast, for the peril of death was off his soul, and through the darkness of his present condition his lawyer's nose got scent of a future action, and more costs, he told Gee that he should not be released from his chains, and all the other terrors of that den, until he gave a cheque on his bankers for the payment of £800 of Mrs. Canning's money, which he had still in his hands, and also an order for the delivery of the deeds of the property, on which a sum of £1200 had been lent out. This singular demand, extraordinary as it was, and even under such abnormal circumstances, roused all the solicitor in the breast of the enchained Mr. Gee. He remonstrated with the parties on the impropriety—nay, the illegality—of their proceedings—as if fellows who had gone to this extent cared for proprieties or illegalities—and requested, entreated, nay, advised them to release him.

He does not seem to have dreamt of the possibility

of their murdering him out of the way; nor, luckily for him, did the other "parties" either. They contented themselves with remarking that they were perfectly aware they were not acting in accordance with the law; but that was *their law*, and released he should not be until he had given the cheque for £800, and the order for the delivery of the securities, as they required; nor should he leave that house until cash had been received for the one, and the deeds for the other.

He hesitated, then refused; and they were about to leave him in darkness, when he called them back, and expressed his intention to comply with their request; for what was money compared with life, and he knew he was in their power.

They brought him pen, ink, and paper, and he wrote out and gave them a cheque on his bankers, the Messrs. Gibsons, of Saffron Walden, for £800, as well as a letter to Mr. Bell, a gentleman residing near Bishop's Stortford, who was one of the executors of the deceased Mrs. Canning, which letter instructed Mr. Bell to deliver the deeds required. This done, the "parties" actually shook hands with him all round, and one of them instantly went upstairs; and Mr. Gee heard his steps along the passage, and the door banging to after him, as if he had left the house for the purpose of either getting the cheque cashed at the agents of the banking-house in town, or proceeding with it and the letter into the country.

After Mr. Gee had written and signed the documents

a great revulsion of feeling naturally came over him, and he felt exceedingly faint; so much so, that he made a request that one of the parties would get him a bottle of soda water. A request so singular to such people could not be complied with, but they did all they conveniently could; they held a pot of beer to his lips, and he drank a little. They then left him to himself, and all the horrors of his situation, for three hours, during which he was worked up almost to a madness of terror, until at last, by a powerful exertion and a violent compression of his body, he managed, with a severe, strong effort, to shift a little upwards the iron chain which passed across his chest, and bound tight his arms, and ultimately he worked his head, and then his body, out of it. Enabled by this means to untie the cords which bound his feet to the flooring, and being thus free, he rushed out of the back door, and after clambering over several garden walls, succeeded in reaching the public street. Luckily the two men were in the front parlour at dinner, and did not perceive him, or follow to frustrate his escape. Had they done so, as he was then in a state of almost raving madness from terror, his resistance and struggle would, no doubt, have led to consequences immediately unpleasant to both parties; although, as I have before had occasion to observe, there is nothing that thieves so much dread as a personal quarrel or obstruction in their business, and the inconvenient noise which such indecorous contact necessarily occasions.

But these fellows were not professional thieves; for, although they had at least two hours and a half's start of him, yet Mr. Gee, on his arrival at his bankers' agent's house, ascertained, to his great joy, that the cheque had not been presented there; so that he was actually in time, by special message, to stop its payment at Saffron Walden.

Now the police came into play. Mr. Walker, the magistrate, gave directions to Miller, his chief officer, immediately; and Lea and Shelswell, two shrewd "mousers," were sent off at once with Mr. Gee to York Street. On arriving there they found the house closed both back and front, and were obliged to force an entry. The birds had flown! The house had been quite divested of furniture, if any had ever been there except a few chairs in the parlour. They made at once for the back kitchen, where they discovered a place of about five feet by three, partitioned off by boards of immense strength, with a seat. About a foot from this seat was a strong piece of timber, extending from side to side; and in the centre was a large and heavy piece of chain, made fast at one side by a strong swivel, and at the other by a large bolt and padlock. There was also made fast to the floor, at the bottom of the seat, a strong bar of wood, through two swivels, in which two long pieces of sash-line passed, that had been used for fastening Mr. Gee's feet. Immediately after Mr. Gee's escape two men had been seen to come out of the back door of the house, and over a wall into a neighbouring garden. On

being pulled up there, and asked what they wanted, they grew very confused, and answered that they were in pursuit of a thief who had made his escape. But they did not go forward farther over the garden walls, and were observed shortly after by the neighbours, who did not like the look of them, to leave the house in rather a skulking and suspicious manner.

All this story came to the Home Secretary's knowledge, and, of course, the police were very much on the alert for their own sakes; and of course, as these fellows were not regular thieves, they were soon all picked up in due course.

But now came the fun of the thing.

Police, prisoners, victim, lawyers, sheriffs, and judges, all met in array at the Old Bailey. Then the grand farce was played out.

Lacossaine, Weedon, and Edwards—such were their names—were duly placed at the bar. The first count of the indictment charged the prisoners with having, on the 12th of May, feloniously demanded from William Gee a certain security for £1200, and interest due thereon; in another count the prisoners were charged with feloniously demanding certain other securities for the sum of £1200; and, in a third count, with feloniously demanding a security for the sum of £800, with intent to steal it.

As bold as brass the prisoners stood up and pleaded, "Not guilty;" indeed, nothing would have made the lawyers more angry than their doing otherwise.

At it they went—the lawyers, I mean—and a glorious day they had of it amongst themselves. Every one knew that the prisoners were decidedly guilty; but the whole question argued was, that they ought not to be tried. There they were all three at the bar, accused and pleading; but the lawyers said they ought not to be tried. It did not matter that they had been locked up from May to July for the purpose of being tried, and that they had been sent from Mile End to Newgate, and handed up from Newgate to the Old Bailey dock to be tried, and that, there, was the accuser to charge them, and the jury to try them, and the judge to see them tried, and sentence them if convicted. What availed all these against the lawyers and the law? And so the lawyers would have it that, in spite of all, they ought not to be tried.

In short, they "raised a question under the Act of 7 and 8 George IV. c. 29, sec. 6, whether an indictment could be sustained in a case where the party had not the property about his person." Mr. Gee, not having had the sum of £800 about him (no one but a fool or a banker's clerk ever has), it was argued by the lawyers that the indictment could not be sustained. The judges, delighted with the acumen of their learned brethren, chuckled over the discovery of this flaw, and fully agreed with them that an indictment, so formed, could not, under such circumstances, be sustained.

Weedon winked at Edwards; but Lacossaine stood

quite quiet, evidently rather flabbergasted at the discovery, and trembling all the while, when he heard the great Mr. Dolly, for the prosecution, contend that it was not at all necessary that the money should have been on the person of Mr. Gee; the question, as he argued, being whether the prisoners, by menaces and threats, intended to procure the money from Mr. Gee; and whether there was not an assault, with intent to rob him of that amount.

But this specification of amount only made matters worse, and the judge considered it necessary to stop the case on the objection; the indictment stating that the prisoners, by threats, &c., intended to take "from the person" of Mr. Gee; and Mr. Gee not having the amount of £800 upon his person, Mr. Justice Patterson told the jury that they could not find the prisoners guilty under this indictment; and they therefore returned a verdict of acquittal!

But this was not all. There was yet another trial, and more legal cleverness, and more generosity on the part of the law to its well-beloved thieves.

The prisoners were charged on a second indictment for demanding from Mr. Gee, "with threats and menaces," a legal security for £1200, and an order for £800 upon Mr. William Gibson, the banker, at Saffron Walden.

At it again went the lawyers on both sides, hammer and tongs; and the end of it all was that Mr. Justice Patterson "held that, as Mr. Gee never had the po-

session of the paper on which the direction for giving up the security, and as there could be no robbery where there was no possession" (see how the truth helps the lie!), "the indictment could not be sustained. A man could not be said to be robbed of his property," said the acute judge, "which, in fact, was not his."

The wise judge looked at the piece of paper as a piece of paper, and shut his eyes entirely to the writing on it, which alone made it valuable. That's one of the reasons why they always describe "justice" as blind. There are none so blind as those that won't see!

Mr. Justice Bosanquet (another venerable ass) "concurred with his learned brother" that, as Mr. Gee never was in possession of the notes, "and as the paper they were written upon did not belong to him," the indictment must fail. "There was a difference between procuring money by cleverness and procuring it by stealing."

Oh!

So the judge told the jury that the indictment went for nothing, and the prisoners were acquitted!

That's what I call a specimen of English law! Who would not be a thief after that?

I remember, while at Philipstown jail, hearing of a similar transaction, not quite so romantically conducted, but equally audacious in design, and similarly abortive in result, which occurred in Cork. At ten o'clock in the morning a person of gentlemanly manners, respectably dressed, went to the residence of a gentleman

named Wise, in the North Wall (one of the principal streets in that beautiful city), knocked at the door, and handed a letter to a female servant, with a request to convey it instantly to her master. This letter, which was signed "William Lauder," requested a private interview with Mr. Wise, as the writer had some important business to transact. The letter was of a nature to claim attention, and, on perusing it, Mr. Wise desired the servant to show the bearer up to him. It happened that Mr. Wise was confined to his bed at the time with illness, and this must have been known to the party. On entering the room in which he lay, the applicant closed the door behind him, and locked it, walked over to the bedside, took a pistol from his pocket, raised the pan and examined the priming, and then, with his left hand, drew from another pocket a folded paper, open, however, at one end. This part of the document he exhibited to Mr. Wise, and, presenting the pistol at his head, said to him,—

"Sign this, or you are a dead man!"

Mr. Wise, in terrible agitation and alarm, stammered out the question, "What is it?" He replied, "I won't tell you; but sign it at the peril of your life." Mr. Wise then said, if it were money he wanted, there were blank cheques upon the table beside him, and he would fill one of them for him. The man answered that he did not want a cheque—he would either have his name to that document, or his life.

Unable to summon the servants, or to make any

effort to relieve himself of his unwelcome and peremptory visitor, Mr. Wise, somewhat alarmed at the perilous position in which he found himself so unexpectedly placed, hesitated for a moment, on which the fellow said,—

"Come, come, there 's no time to be lost. Sign that, or in one moment you are a dead man!"

Thus urged and threatened, the invalid then raised himself in his bed, and the other handed him a pen from the table at its side. But, agitated as he was, Mr. Wise was sufficiently master of himself to write his name in a way so different from that in which he ever wrote it before, as to afford an easy clue to the detection of the document whenever it was presented, and to invalidate it if reserved until after his death, which most probably was the intention in procuring it. While signing the name, Mr. Wise perceived, under the folds of the paper, an 8 and two ciphers: what other, or whether any other, figures were there, he could not tell.

Having accomplished his object, the person who presented the paper took it over to the fire, and held it to dry, examining it deliberately two or three times during the process, remaining all the while with his face turned towards Mr. Wise, and his eyes firmly fixed upon him.

This occupied about a minute and a half. He then (putting the pistol on half cock) returned to the bed, and said,—

"So far I have accomplished what I wanted; I have now but to say that if you attempt to make the least noise, or to give the least alarm, until I am out of the house, I will return, though I should be at the hall door, and blow your brains out."

This said, he placed the paper and the pistol in his pocket, made a bow to Mr. Wise, and walked, deliberately and calmly, down the stairs. Mr. Wise, after a few minutes, rang the bell, and having directed some of the servants to remain with him, sent for the sheriffs and a magistrate, and swore informations against the delinquent, whose person, however, he could not recognise, and had no recollection of having ever set eyes upon before. A large reward was offered for the man's apprehension, but he was never heard of afterwards, neither has the document ever yet come to light.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE QUEEN OF HOLLAND'S DIAMONDS.

"Glittering stones and golden things,
Wealth and honours that have wings,
Ever fluttering to be gone,
I could never call my own."

DR. WATTS.

AMONG the strange stories which I heard of and told myself during our long voyage, in the evenings, on the deck, while we smoked our cigars together, there was another, that forcibly struck me at the moment, about the Queen of Holland's jewels, which is remarkably curious, and deserves a more lengthened narration.

I have mentioned in a previous chapter how Wonderful Jack, myself, and Lean Jem, in the beginning of our career, succeeded in obtaining her Majesty's plate-chest, and the disappointment we experienced. All royal personages are not so fortunate; for the late Queen of Holland, while Princess of Orange, was the

victim of a singular jewel robbery. Some thirty years since, on the morning of the 26th of October, 1829, while the Prince of Orange was absent from the palace, and the princess was at the Castle of Tervueren, a general alarm was created amongst the royal attendants by the discovery that a casket called a *diamantaire*, in which her Royal Highness kept her jewels, had been forcibly broken open and carried off, with the great quantity of precious stones and pearls which it contained. There were a number of valuable papers also in the casket, but these were found scattered about the floor, a circumstance which led to a suspicion that the thieves who had stolen the jewels were persons of no condition. An observation of this character may seem superfluous; but you who remember the loss of the Duchess of Minster's diamonds, and to what person of distinction they were traced, and how recovered, in Dublin, will not be surprised. Indeed, to men who know the world, few matters *are* surprising, especially in circumstances where jewels are concerned. It is not many years ago since, in Holy Rome itself, a complete gang of illustrious thieves was discovered, all of them belonging to noble families, and several of them even serving in the Pope's own body guard, all of whom are of the greatest families—dukes, marquises, and princes. Most of this fashionable and high-born gang were looked upon in society as persons of more than ordinary piety. The Countess Compagnoni, of Macerata, was the one to denounce them; and the first parties arrested

were none other than the Count Dionisi da Trejàl, and that most charming of women, the Countess Angelucci da Trejà. Jewels were the leading temptation to these rich, high-born, and handsome young sinners. At their houses were found a great number of watches, snuff-boxes, jewels, &c.; and there was a general rummage and recognition at Rome of lost treasures for some days afterwards.

To return to the Princess of Orange's jewels. The top of the *diamantaire* was covered with glass, through which the jewels deposited immediately under it were visible; and on breaking this glass, and removing the jewels, a key would be found under it that opened the lower part of the casket, the different compartments of which contained other jewels. A costly Cashmere shawl, belonging to the princess, was also missing; but this, greatly to the surprise of all, and as if still more to bewilder those engaged in endeavouring to trace the offenders, was afterwards found on one of the ramparts; and it was supposed that it had been wrapped about the casket in the bed-chamber, and afterwards thrown away. But what thief would have thrown away such a shawl? This made matters more puzzling. Then, too, how could the princess's bed-chamber have been reached, or the palace robbed—a palace so well guarded—without servants, attendants, or sentinels perceiving anything?

Not that palaces, with all their guards, are by any means more secure from nocturnal visitors than private

houses. You can remember the "Boy Jones." How often I have wished I had enjoyed his opportunities! Besides, there was the robbery of the new palace of Prince William of Prussia (the present king), a few years since, where the burglars only carried off fourteen pounds in silver, because, when they had got in, they were unable to force open the strong boxes in which the treasure of gold and diamonds was contained. Yet they *did* get in, though Berlin is like a large barrack, filled with soldiers and swarming with police, and though that palace stands in the most exposed part of the town, is opposite the Academy, close to the Opera House, and within sight of the King's House and the Arsenal. Every open door in that quarter has sentinels outside, and, at the time of the robbery, there could not be less than twenty or thirty of these armed watchmen within call when the booty was carried off.

When an exact search was made, the only clue afforded was the appearance of certain marks like scratches upon a garden wall. This having been surmounted, the thief, or thieves, must have passed through the garden of the palace to a terrace, upon which a glass door opened. One of the panes of this glass door was found broken; and it bore the marks of having been smeared with clay, or rubbed with the fingers of a hand soiled in passing over the wall. When this pane of glass was broken, the door could be opened on the inside. From this door a suite

of apartments led to the princess's private chamber (a princess's private chamber protected only by a pane of glass—this is the way all these things happen!), where the casket stood on a table close to the fireplace.

No one was missing from the palace, no one absent—all the servants, down to the lowest messenger or gardener's boy, in their usual places, at their usual avocations, and all unsuspected. Only a monkey, a favourite with the princess and the royal children, was not to be found. Sambino was hunted for through town and country, but to no avail. Could it be possible? Was Sambino, the royal ape, the thief? Had he, in mischief, broken the casket, swallowed the jewels, or thrown them away, or hid them and gone off in terror? There was a strange story, then just rife, about a murder by a monkey in the Rue de la Morgue, at Paris; and the notion being one of mystery, people clung to it, and this jewel robbery was set down to the royal ape.

Neither was this idea so utterly extravagant as might be supposed. The glass of the casket had been broken, which was a useless waste of time to those who knew its contents, and carried them off in it. The shawl was taken away, and then left. The high wall had been clambered, and the window broken. But who could have walked about the palace, and into the princess's bedroom, unobserved? Indeed, what stranger could have found his way there? and who, unknowing as a stranger must have been, would have gone there, and there only, for the *diamantaire*—an article likely

to have raised the monkey's curiosity, which must have seen the princess often carefully examine her jewels, unlock it, take them out, and put them back again?

I have met with some strange thieves in my time, but certainly the strangest I ever knew was a ribbed-faced baboon which I saw at Shrewsbury, when on the tramp, in early life. This monkey had been trained, by some itinerant showmen, to commit robberies at night by climbing up places inaccessible to men, and thereby gain entrance through the bedroom windows. The terror of those who met the beast accidentally, while engaged in this work, was great. They took him for the Evil Spirit; and he had been taught to run at people when he saw them, and then turn round and escape, which he did with the greatest agility and rapidity. In this manner the town of Shrewsbury was alarmed one night by the screams of fright and rage proceeding from a house in the High Street. A lady, on retiring to rest, found the animal at her dressing-table, clearing off her trinkets. It instantly made towards her, and she shrieked with affright, just in time to arouse her husband, who luckily was coming up the stairs after her to their bedroom. He rushed upon the animal impulsively; but the baboon was a large one, and monkeys of this species are stronger than a man. So furiously did the beast fight, and bite, and scratch, that the lady's husband was glad to let him go; and the creature escaped, jabbering, by the window, with a gold watch and chain in his hand.

Pursuit was useless at the moment; and before it could be properly organised the showmen had left the town, carrying with them the supposed burglar.

However, in this case of the Princess of Orange's jewels, the authorities at the Hague did not remain entirely satisfied with this conclusion of Sambino's being the guilty party. Royal jewels are of no trifling value, and diamonds of any size are sure to turn up somewhere. In fact, every great diamond is as well known in the world's market to the jewellers as a painting by a great master to the *cognoscenti*. The measures taken to trace the property supposed to be stolen in the manner described were, however, for a long time fruitless.

At last, however, news turned up about the jewels from the other side of the Atlantic. In the month of July, 1831, Mynheer Bangaman Huygens, then Dutch Consul at New York, was waited upon by a mysterious Frenchman, one Monsieur Roumage, who, after a great deal of negotiation, communicated to that worthy official the pleasing intelligence that the lost jewels were in that city, and that he, Monsieur Roumage, claimed the large reward offered for their discovery by the Dutch Government. Monsieur Roumage, a plausible scoundrel in his way, went on to say, that the jewels had been brought over to New York by one Constant Polari, who had arrived there recently, in company with a female named Susanne Blanche. Always expect a woman to appear on the scene where there is mischief and treachery between men. It turned out, on further inquiry, that

Mynheer Bangaman Huygens had not been the first person informed of the arrival of these jewels, but that he alone knew what they were, and to whom they of right appertained; for Monsieur Roumage, previous to giving this information to the Dutch Consul, had for some purposes of his own, from being aware that precious stones are subject to a duty on importation into the United States, given notice to the collector of customs at New York that Constant Polari had introduced jewels fraudulently, without entering them for duty. This brought the collector of customs down to Polari's lodgings, where a great number of very valuable precious stones were discovered and seized. Nevertheless, Polari, being an older thief than the collector of customs, contrived to elude his vigilance, even though a Yankee and a custom-house officer, by concealing a considerable number of precious stones in a tube shaped in the form of a walking-cane, and in the stick of an umbrella, which was also hollow. Immediately after this search, Polari, taking alarm, buried these reserved jewels, with the assistance of Susanne Blanche, in a certain spot in the country, near New York.

On hearing from Monsieur Roumage that the collector had seized the precious stones, the Dutch Consul lost no time in comparing them with the description in his possession, and satisfied himself that they were the identical jewels stolen from the *diamantaire* belonging to the Princess of Orange; so he caused Polari to be apprehended, and required him to

explain how they came into his possession. The latter was taken by surprise, and, after much evasion, remarked to Mynheer Huygens that his information must have been originally obtained through Susanne Blanche, who alone was in his confidence, and thus, therefore, he would confess. The jewels were doubtless the property of the Princess of Orange; but he solemnly declared that he was not the thief, and knew nothing of the manner in which the robbery had been accomplished. Susanne Blanche had, in fact, "peached" to the Dutch Consul, and told him the same story, with the addition that Polari had buried in the neighbourhood of Brussels a pot containing other valuable articles, and all the cases and gold settings of the jewels.

Monsieur Roumage, who had made Susanne Blanche's acquaintance unknown to Polari, learned from her these facts, and being unable to get hold of the jewels, which Polari kept about his person, thought it as well to secure all he could by obtaining the reward. He also had received from that treacherous little puss the information about the concealment of the jewels that had escaped the collector of custom's seizure, and the place where they were buried in a wood near New York. This knowledge both he and Susanne kept to themselves; and having got Polari safe in prison, locked up out of their way, Roumage and Susanne resolved to dig up this last lot of jewels, and go off with them to England there to enjoy a honeymoon.

No time was lost by Roumage in extracting the jewels from the secret hole; but when he came to look over them he found one or two so large and so famous, and of such great value, that a sale of them would be impossible. So he carried them to the Dutch Consul, saying he had discovered them since Polari's arrest, in the hope that by so doing he should escape any suspicion awakened by his preparation for departure. But he reckoned too cunningly. He did too much. It is never wise for a known rascal to pretend to honesty. And so it fell out with Monsieur Roumage; for, in the course of a subsequent examination of Constant Polari, Mynheer Bangaman Huygens, in the hope of obtaining further disclosures, exhibited one of the jewels he had just received from the over-clever Roumage, and asked the astounded Polari whether he knew it. Polari saw at a glance that Susanne must have betrayed him, so he spoke out, told the story, and described the place where he had concealed the treasure. There was a race at once to the spot between Mynheer Bangaman Huygens and the Yankee collector of customs; but they, of course, found nothing. Nothing remained but to obtain warrants for the apprehension of Roumage and Susanne Blanche; but these were of no avail, that happy and wealthy couple having sailed for England the day before. Mynheer Huygens, however, despatched a vessel after them, that caught them at Liverpool, where they were apprehended; and the jewels, after having twice crossed the Atlantic, were delivered into

the safe custody of the Dutch Consul at that port, and ultimately reached their royal home once more. In the mean time an iron pot, which had been buried in a wood near Brussels, was dug up. In it were found a number of cameos and small stones, and all the gold settings of the jewels, and beside it the skeleton of poor Sambino, the royal ape, which, it appeared, had followed the robber, and in the attempt to seize from him the jewel-case had broken the glass, and also had dragged the princess's shawl away from the thief's hands. He fell a martyr to his fidelity.

Constant Polari, who had been sent in custody to Holland, stated, in his examination, that in the year 1827 he came to Brussels from Lyons, where he had been carrying on business, but had failed; that in the month of November, 1829, as he was walking in a wood, he observed three persons busied in digging a hole; that, on the following night, he went to the same spot, and, on digging, found the casket and the jewels; and that, on examining the jewels, he felt convinced that they were those, about which so much noise was made, and had been stolen from the palace of the Princess of Orange. Some of the jewels he had sold at Lyons when he visited Susanne Blanche, in July, 1830, and again in January, 1831, when he revisited her, and prevailed upon that frail, deluding fair one to embark with him for New York, under the name of Carrara.

They take a long while to work out these matters in

foreign courts of law; indeed, they seem to me to mumble them over as an old *gourmand* does a morsel of game, afraid to swallow it, lest he should too soon lose the pleasant flavour. So it was the 7th of March, 1834, before Constant Polari, after various examinations and remands, was indicted and tried before the Court of South Holland. Before that day he confessed the robbery. On his trial, after the first witness—Mynheer de Knyff van Gontreuil, Referendary to the Council of State, and formerly chief of the Brussels police (for the prince had lost Belgium, in addition to the jewels, in the interval)—had concluded his deposition relative to the discovery of the loss of the precious stones—a matter of fact which might have been taken for granted, but the narration of which, in Mr. Knyff's best style, occupied the whole of three hours—the President asked the prisoner whether he had any remarks to make on that officer's evidence. Upon this Polari addressed the court in a long narrative, which he commenced by again avowing his guilt, and his sincere repentance for having committed a crime, that he considered the greater on account of the "infamous advantage which calumny and malevolence had taken of that unfortunate event, and declaring that he was the sole offender, and had no accomplice." This was an allusion to the court and political scandal of the period, one part of which was that the princess had a lover (an entire falsehood), who had made off with the jewels, to the infinite terror and dismay of the royal lady, and

the great anger of her Prussian imperial relatives; the other (a Belgian lie), that his Royal Highness the Prince had broken into his own palace, robbed his own wife, and pawned her jewels. A nice charge, this, against a gentleman who was to have married our Princess Charlotte, would have been uncle to Queen Victoria, and occupied the post at present so ably filled by his Serene and Royal Highness Prince Albert. I need not say there was no truth whatsoever, or the slightest shadow of it, in all these stories; but they were mischievous at the time, as they were intended to be, and seriously affected public feeling, tending to forward, foster, and assist the subsequent revolutions at Brussels. Character in kings and queens is of great consequence now-a-days. You will remember the Queen of France's diamond necklace, and her false position with Cardinal de Rohan. Indeed, I question very much whether, with all our varnish, another George IV. would go down—or rather, wouldn't go down—with the people of England. The better royal children of all nations are brought up, the more chance will there be of their keeping their places.

Constant Polari, like most foreign criminals that I have heard about, seemed to have a tenderness for his own memory and character, and to think more about what would be said of him than the roguery, as people call it, which he had committed. In the course of his address he said that he intrusted Susanne Blanche with the secret of his having buried an iron pot, con-

taining part of the jewels, near the cemetery at Trenouille, for the express purpose that after his death there might exist proof of his being the robber, and that innocent persons might thus be relieved from all suspicion. He had even resolved to leave in the hands of Susanne Blanche a paper acknowledging his guilt, with directions that it should be produced after his death!

The meaning of all this was that he wanted his sentence commuted, and thought he was playing into the hands of the Court; but it was a poor, weak, roundabout trick. Beside the Referendary, Mynheer de Knyff van Gontreuil, only two other witnesses were examined —a Russian councillor of state, whose name I cannot pronounce, and find it impossible to write, and the *femme de chambre* of her Royal Highness the Princess of Orange—a much more pretentious personage, I can assure you, than was her Royal Highness the Princess of Orange herself. These were called merely to identify the trinkets. The advocate, who defended Constant Polari did not take his money for nothing, I can tell you; for he came out in the grandest style, and made an oration after the fashion of Cicero and Demosthenes, as I was told by a learned English counsel who was present on the occasion. He insisted that Constant Polari was an innocent man—an oppressed man—a victim to prejudice—betrayed in his best affections by the woman he loved, the friend he trusted—a man whose condition was every way pitiable—to whom the

good owed every sympathy, the merciful all compassion! He argued vehemently that no regard ought to be paid to his client's confession, and stoutly asserted that there was nothing in it, that he, Constant Polari, might not easily have collected from the many and various accounts of the robbery and its circumstances in all the newspapers of the continent. There was no lack of examples, he said, of persons sacrificing themselves, for political or court purposes, for patriotism or loyalty, by accusing themselves, from various motives, of crimes which they never had committed. The Dutch judges blubbered and swelled with emotion, but Polari would not be rescued by any such quiddities. He repudiated his counsel, and adhered to his confession, adding to it the corroborative story of the poor monkey, Sambino. He got off, however, with a light sentence—"exposition in the pillory for half an hour, twelve years' imprisonment, and payment of the expenses of the process"—a strange addition when a criminal is ruined, as he always is by proceedings of this character. The sentence concluded with an order "that an extract of the judgment be posted up at the Hague" (an "extract," indeed! for the judgment itself was a great volume of parchment), "and also at Brussels."

That is the story of the Queen of Holland's jewels; and a strange story it is.

CHAPTER XLIII.

AN ESCAPE FROM NEWGATE.

"From his dark den, blaspheming, drags his chain."
YOUNG.

WE seldom went into the fore part of the vessel, among the poorer passengers; but one fine evening, while walking the deck with Martin Deverell, we saw a party of seamen and returning diggers listening so intently to a "yarn" which an old digger was "pitching," that we went up close, and stood by them to hear the following story, which had many points in it of much personal interest to myself:—

"My name," said the man, "is Thomas Whitehead, though they call me Henry Williams, and I was bred and born a sweep. Some years ago I fell into bad company, and at last formed a housebreaking gang, and was caught and sentenced for life. Waiting my turn for a ship in the capital convicts' yard at Newgate, it struck me, when I looked at a corner of the yard there, that if I could get a chance, it was not impossible that a man who had climbed up so many chimneys might

get up there. To be sure the walls were sixty feet high; but what then? In one of the corners, where the two walls joined each other, there was a water cistern, and the stones had scaled off in many places, and become rough, owing to a lot of scaffold poles and ladders, that used to rest against the walls, having been burnt so long ago as the riots in 1780. The cistern would give me a start of ten feet, and if I could scramble up the other fifty feet I should then only have to master the revolving spikes. At last came the time when we were turned out for half an hour's walk, and up I went, contriving, by keeping my back to one side of the angle, and working with my hands behind me, while I worked with my bare feet in the nooks, but without touching shoulders or any part of my back to the wall, to reach the revolving iron-work. After I got a few feet up I could see I had my work to do, and that the least slip would be fatal; but I had begun it, and I determined to go through with it. At last I got to the revolving iron spikes, and here my heart almost failed me, for I found it impossible to squeeze through, as I had expected, and so reach the top of the wall; and so at last, taking heart, I lay down upon them and went round with them. A fearful chance that was, I can tell you. But in this manner I contrived to catch hold of an iron spike that stuck out of an opposite wall of the day-room to the cells; but in doing this I had to go round the walls, for three parts of them, upon the spikes, with my bare feet along the iron railing, and to jump from there

to the top of the wall. The spikes stuck in my feet, and one of them poked a hole in the small of my back; but I kept steady, and did not suffer anything to frighten me, though I could see several people from the garret windows of the neighbouring houses, with which I was now on a level, looking curiously at me, as I was labouring at the peril of my life for my release. I believe the reason no one gave the alarm was, that those who thus gazed on me as if they were at a play, and saw me in such a terrible situation of danger, had humane fears for my life, and determined not to endanger it by any outcry, for the slightest tremour would certainly, just then, have insured my death. The spring from the spikes to the top of the wall was most awful. I believed at one time I should have gone through the skylight of one of the houses in Newgate Street, as part of the mortar gave way; but my good luck stuck to me all through, and I sprang the eight or nine feet over, and steadied myself on the wall. It was no use looking down or looking back; so on I went, casting my eyes about on the top of the houses in Newgate Street to find some passage down into the street. But now I felt myself all right and safe about this; for once among the chimneys, and I was at home. If I could not get down by a skylight or a chance ladder, I was sure to find my way comfortably down one of the chimneys; but I wanted to avoid this if possible, as I should run the risk of alarming some one by coming into his room out of the fireplace, and so expose

myself to detection. Getting over the top of the day-room to the cells, I passed on to the roof of the Ordinary's house, which you know is the first in the street after Newgate itself; but some one had gone in this way before, and so the entrance had been stopped up, and I soon saw there was no chance in that quarter. I then climbed over the next Newgate Street houses' roofs, but these were also closed up; so I turned to the tops in Warwick Lane, having left my coat, which I found in the way, on the roof of the third house in Newgate Street. There was need to skulk a little as I slipped along like a bird over the houses towards Warwick Square, for I wanted to avoid being seen by the workmen in Tyler's manufactory, that used to be the College of Physicians, where they anatomised poor coves in a large room with a dome and great skylight; and at last, to my great joy, I saw a woman hanging out some clothes to dry on the leads of a house in Warwick Lane. I must have been a nice sight to her surely, for I had only the jail shirt and trousers on, and bare feet, and bleeding hands, and grimy face; but I hid myself until she went in, and then I followed her gently, and appealed to her feelings, and told her I was escaping for my life; and she was a good woman, and took compassion on me, and bade me pass down the stairs. So I did, pretty quick, as you may suppose; but going through the house, I ran up against another woman and a girl of fourteen, who set up a little scream; but I begged them to be quiet and have mercy on me, and

told them how I was escaping from the gallows, and a repentant sinner; and that turned them, and they cleared the way to the hall door for me, and I walked out into the broad daylight and the free air once more, with one and fourpence in my pocket to begin the world with.

"I crossed over at once into the Blue-coat School, up a passage, where there were some new buildings going on; but the workmen told me to leave the place, as that was no throroughfare, and there was no business on the spot for naked beggars. This showed me the difference at once between the hearts of men and women. But I had no power to help myself; so I did as I was told, and walked boldly up Newgate Street, along Cheapside, and over London Bridge, through the crowded streets, where every one seemed gay and bustling; but few were as happy as I was that day. On crossing the river I turned up the left shore, and crept on to Wandsworth. The first house I entered was a beer-shop—and didn't I enjoy that pint of heavy! and what comfort it gave me! I had a pennyworth of baccy, too, and a pipe; and if ever you want to enjoy a pipe, I advise you to get shut in Newgate for six weeks, and go without it, and then get out of Newgate as I did it, and work as hard for it, and walk as far, and then won't you enjoy *that* pipe! It was now about eight o'clock in the evening; but I walked on until I got close upon Kingston, when I lay down in a field and stretched myself out to sleep, which

did sound enough until four o'clock next morning—a good six hours' spell right out. And what do you think was the first thing to wake me? Why, the cry of 'Sweep!' in the town. I followed it, pleased enough, I can tell you, and succeeded in getting employment in my old trade from a widow, who gave me my bub and grub and one shilling and sixpence for nine days' work; so you see how hard a man may work to live honestly. However, I could not stand this; so I left the neighbourhood of London, and started off on the tramp for Gosport. Here I could not get any work to do, and was obliged to pick up a bit of bread in any company I could fall into; and at last I was caught again for housebreaking at Lymington, and lodged in Winchester jail, when old Mr. Cope, the kind-hearted old governor of Newgate, came down, and recognised me as one of his chickens, and took me back to the old coop. They sent me over the water, and I laboured well and got to the diggings, and am now going home to rest my bones in the old Potteries up by Gray's Inn Lane. I never did anybody any harm in my worst days, and was always willing to do a day's hard work for small wages whenever I could get it; but, somehow or other, it was not to be got constant, and so I went to the bad. Now I don't want work, and have got enough to give me five-and-twenty bob a week for life, and hope to live quiet and die an honest man, as my father did before me. Now, then, give us a light; and who 's for the next yarn?"

CHAPTER XLIV.

SIXTEEN DAYS OF DEATH.

"Messmates, hear a brother sailor
Sing the dangers of the seas."
Old Song—"*The Bay of Biscay.*"

THE next man to speak was a veteran tar—a tall, lean man, with a weather-beaten visage, strongly marked, and that expression in the eye which marks one who has looked Death closely in the face—a scared, wan, staring, stern look. He took his pipe out of his mouth and went right on:—

"You have had rough weather, Mr. Whitehead, certainly, and been in some danger; but I think I have gone through more than you, for I have been sitting out at sea in an open boat, face to face with Death, for days and nights, while you had to look at him only for an hour. My name is Mahoney—Patrick Mahoney—of Foynes. It was on the 24th of November, 1835, when I sailed out from St. John's, Newfoundland, in the *Francis Spoight*, 345 tons, burden—as fine a brig as ever walked the waters. She was laden with timber, and we mustered a crew of sixteen men in all,

besides the captain and mate—not all of them good hands, as often happens in such ships—most of them only boatmen trained on the Shannon; some from Kilrush, a few from Tarbert, and two, myself included, from Feynes. For the first eight or nine days we had glorious weather, but afterwards it came on to blow so hard that we were obliged to drive before the wind under a mizzen-topsail. If ever you were on board a timber-laden ship with a bad crew, you would know what sort of a time this was. I had, all along, a notion that something would go wrong, for we had sailed on a Friday; and at last, sure enough, it did come. On December 3rd, at three o'clock in the morning, just after I had turned in, an alarm was raised by a cry and confusion on deck. Up I jumped, all standing, and found that the vessel, either steering wild, through the carelessness of the helmsman, or perhaps from her bad trim, had suddenly hove to, and there she was, lying like a log on the trough of the sea. The day had not yet dawned; it was still very dark, and so frightfully did the waves break over her, that neither the skipper nor the mate could get the lubberly part of the crew then on watch to obey his directions, nor even when it was plain she was filling rapidly could they be prevailed upon to work the pumps. I did all I could, but it was of no use—the men were thinking of saving themselves instead of saving the ship; so they climbed up the sides and clung to the rigging, while the ship was going down under them. In less than an hour she

lay on her beam ends. Two poor fellows, Pat Cusack and Pat Behone, were drowned in the forecastle, and William Griffiths, the mate, in the after-cabin, into which he had gone a few minutes before to get out his clothes and money. The captain, myself, and a man named Murville, a resolute fellow, and an able seaman of the right sort, got to the fore-sheets of the main-mast, and cut them away; the mizzen-topmast went with them over the side, and the ship righted at once; but as soon as she did this, being so full of water, she settled down in the sea, and there was scarcely any portion of her to be seen above the wash of the waves, except the poop and bulwarks. Hopeless and miserable were we all, in the depth of a winter's night, standing ankle deep on the wreck, and clinging in the darkness to whatever was nearest, sea after sea all the while rolling successively over us. This was bad enough, but we knew not the full horror of our condition until the dawn of the morning, for the coming of which we all looked eastward with intense anxiety. We then discovered that our provisions had been washed overboard, and that, as the holds were filled by the sea, we had no means of coming at any fresh water. The gale, too, continued through the whole of the morning, and the dreadful swell swept every now and then over the decks; so that for safety, as well as shelter, we had to huddle together into the cabin under the poop. Even here, so deep was she with water, we could not find a dry place to lie upon; and our only rest was standing

close together, all in a heap, leaning against one another. At about ten o'clock in the forenoon our hearts were brightened with hope; for Harrington, one of the crew, a Tarbert man, suddenly descried a vessel to the westward, and for some time we had reason to think her course might be near; but she stood far away, beyond the reach of signal, and was soon out of sight. O the despair of that last half-hour! Next day and the next passed away without the slightest change in the weather—still the gale blew on. On the third day the weather began to moderate, but the sea still ran high. During the whole of this day we remained standing close together, side by side, in the cabin, leaning against one another, or against the ship's sides, unable to take rest or sleep but by fitful, broken moments.

"Hunger was our greatest suffering—not hunger so much as a kind of sinking-like in the stomach. Our thirst, too, was dreadful; and neither of these could we see or think of any means for allaying. There were fifteen hands then alive, and of these not one had tasted a morsel of food since the wreck; and for drink, we had only three bottles of wine, which were found in the cabin. This was served out in little glasses at long intervals. There was rain every now and then; but this, at first, we were not in readiness to save, and got but a scant supply by holding the cover of a soup-tureen under the saddle of the mizzen-mast.

"So we passed six days after the appearance of the

first vessel, when on the seventh another ship was seen on the weather-quarter, outward bound, and only four miles north of us. Oh, my lads, just fancy how our hopes revived, and how intense and awful was the anxiety of all our crew for a short time! We managed to crawl out and hoist an ensign on the mizzen-mast, and part of a sail. The day was very clear, and she could not but see it—at least, we poor wretched men thought so; but she bore away like the other ship had done, and was soon lost to our cheerless and despairing view.. Despair was now in every face. How we lived through the next five days is more than I am able to tell you; but no one of us tasted food. Some few endeavoured to eat the hard horn buttons off their jackets, the only substitute for food that occurred to their minds. There were no means of catching fish, and though we sometimes saw birds fly past us, we had no guns to bring them down with. Horrible as was our situation, it was made yet worse by the wicked conduct of our men towards one another. As their sufferings increased, they all lost all command of their temper, became morose, and sullen, and cross, and selfish in the extreme — such as were still strong securing a lying-place on the floor, and pushing aside those who were weak to shift for themselves in the wet and cold, and even kicking up those who were so ill and feeble that all they wanted was to lie down and die quietly.

"Sixteen days—yes, sixteen weary, dreadful days—w

thus lived through since the wreck, and since we had tasted food. It was now the 19th of December. I never shall forget it. Many of the men were gathering together in groups, and something, that nobody seemed to like to speak out about, seemed to be in agitation among them. The mystery—was it a mystery!—the fearful, awful, sinful mystery, was cleared up in the course of the day. Somehow, at last, they all happened to be collected together in the cabin, and the captain came off deck, where he had been vainly trying to espy a ship, and spoke to us about our desperate condition. He said we were now such a long time without anything to eat, that it was beyond human nature to bear it any longer; that we were already on the verge of the grave, and that the only question left for us now to consider was, whether one or all of us should die. At present, he said, it seemed certain that all must die unless food could be procured, but that if one died the rest might live until some ship came in view.

"Never shall I forget the horrible, wolfish look of the men at each other when these words were uttered. It had been the thought of all—the cruel, tearing thought—that no one had dared to express. Each man looked upon his fellow-man as food for himself! His life depended on his messmate's death! I thought, for the moment, they would have fallen to and murdered one another. There was blood and raging hunger at once in every man's eye—a savage, beast-like look. I cannot bear to think of it even now. But the captain

kept on speaking, and we listened still. He told us his opinion was that one ought to suffer for the rest, and that lots should be drawn between the four boys (O how they screamed, poor creatures!), as they had no families, and could not be considered so great a loss to their friends as those who had wives and children depending on them. Of course—yes, of course—the men unanimously supported this decision. I alone kept silent. I had boys at home of their age.

"The lot was cast. I can't bear to tell you the particulars of the awful ceremony. It fell upon a poor boy named O'Brien. To my horror, the poor child heard the announcement without uttering a word. His face was very pale, but not a feature of it was changed—not a muscle seemed to move or quiver. The men now pressed round him, and they told him he must prepare for death. They plainly hungered for his flesh. The captain said it would be better it should be done by bleeding him in the arm, to which O'Brien made no objection. But who was to do it? Who would be his murderer? Who would have the blood of that poor lad upon his soul? The captain spoke to the cook, John Gorman, and directed him to do it.

"John Gorman, who before had been eager as were the others, shook his head and turned away. The captain told him it was his business—his duty. His duty! John Gorman strenuously refused. But the men threatened him with death himself if he continued obstinate, and they began to crowd upon him; and h-

at last, gave way, and consented. Then did that boy O'Brien, take off his jacket without waiting to be ordered; and—only pausing to beg the men, should any of them ever reach home, to tell his poor mother what had happened to him—bared his right arm, and stood, prepared for death, with a face as calm as a blessed martyr. The cook took out his knife, and cut the child's veins across twice, but the blood would not flow. All drew a long breath as the knife went over, and, when no blood came, there seemed to be much hesitation among the men as to what could be done. I hoped the boy was spared. But O'Brien himself came to their relief, for he immediately desired John Gorman to give him the knife, as he could not be looking at him without putting him to pain. When he had got the knife in his hand, the captain recommended him to try his left arm, which he accordingly did. He tried to open the vein at the bend of the elbow with the point of the knife, as a surgeon would; but, like the cook, he failed in bringing blood. A dead consternation now fell upon all; but in a minute or two the captain said,—

"'This is all of no use; 'tis better to put him out of pain by at once bleeding him in the throat.'

"And some of them said it was true, and that the captain was right; and that if it was to be done—it must be done.

"At this, O'Brien for the first time looked terrified, and begged hard that they would not do so, but give him a little time. He said he was cold and weak, but

that if they would let him lie down and sleep, for a little time, he should get warm, and then he should bleed freely. To this wish there was some expression of dissent from the men; they began to murmur amongst themselves, and presently the captain said to them 'that it was useless leaving the boy in this way, in pain; 'twas best at once to lay hold of him, and let the cook cut his throat.'

"O'Brien, now roused, and driven to desperation, seemed working himself up, in his extremity, for resistance. He declared he would not let them murder him. He was ready to die, if it was his chance; but he would not be slaughtered like a pig. The first man, he said, who laid hands on him, 'twould be worse for that man; that he 'd appear to him at another time; that he 'd haunt him after death, and speak against him on the Judgment Day. But they came on close together, and the poor youth was soon got down; and John Gorman, as cook, was again called upon to put him to death. John Gorman, however, again refused, more strongly than before. Then arose another altercation, and loud and angry words, and threatening gestures. Then John Gorman, weak and irresolute, and seeing that his own life would be taken, instead of O'Brien's, if he persisted (for the men plainly wanted only a slight excuse, and were working themselves up to the deed, as he could see), at length yielded to their menaces. Some one at this time brought him down a large case-knife instead of the clasp-knife th-

he had at first prepared; and with this in his hand, pale and trembling, he stood over O'Brien, who was still struggling, and shrieking, and moaning, as he vainly endeavoured to free himself from three men who were holding him down to be slaughtered. One of them now placed the cover of the tureen (which we had before used to collect the rain) under the boy's neck, to collect the blood, and several wretches called out to the cook to do his duty. The horror-stricken John Gorman several times vainly tried to summon up hardihood for the shocking deed; but when he caught the boy's eye his heart always failed him, and then he looked piteously towards the men. Their cries and threats were, however, loud for death. They raged for blood and food, and had no thought of mercy. He made a desperate effort. There was a short struggle, a cry, a gurgle, a sob, a groan, and O'Brien was no more!

"O horror! The wicked, cruel cannibals! We know what men are—we know not what they may be. Preserve us from temptation! As soon as the horrid act was perpetrated, the blood was served to the men, and they greedily, greedily drank it—I and three others alone refraining. They afterwards laid open the body, and separated the limbs—a fearful butchery! The latter were hung over the stem of the now accursed ship, while a portion of the former was allotted for immediate use. Horrified as many of them—I hope most of them, though I can hardly venture, in truth, to

say so—were at the shocking scene they had just witnessed, yet it seemed as if a growing hunger came upon them all when they saw even this disgusting meal put out for them; and almost every one of them, even the unwilling boys, partook more or less of it. For myself, I confess it, I hungered, though I sickened at the sight, and prayed fervently, and kept myself away. Preserve us from temptation!

"This was the evening of the sixteenth day. They ate again late at night, and some greedily; but the thirst, which before was at least endurable, now became craving, and, as there was no more blood, they slaked it with salt water. Then they laid down to rest; but the cannibal feast bore its fruits. Several were raving and talking wildly through the dismal night, and in the morning, John Gorman, the cook, was observed to be quite insane, his eyes inflamed and glaring, his speech rambling and incoherent, his walk unsteady—he threw his clothes about restlessly, and was often violent. His raving continued during the succeeding night; he was a raging madman in the morning, and then—and then—the veins of his neck were cut, and the blood drawn from him. This was the second death. I lay silent in the cabin, stowed away in a corner, into which I had crawled to hide myself, unable to move or speak, yet quite conscious. Another of the wretched crew, Michael Behane, died unexpectedly, or he would have suffered the same fate as John Gorman. Next morning the captain came off deck, and feeling too weak and

exhausted to keep a look-out, desired some one to take his place above. I roused myself, and went up with Harrington soon after. I leant expiring over the bulwark, when an exclamation from Harrington roused me. He said he thought he could distinguish a sail. 'Sail ho!' he feebly called; and those below immediately crawled up. Yes, it was a sail! A ship was clearly to be seen. She seemed to be bearing towards us. We hoisted signals, weak as we were, and with no small effort. She approached; yet they still feared she would pass us, and, in their extreme terror, they held up—yes, they actually held up—those miserable men—the hands and feet of the boy, O'Brien—to inflame compassion, and denote our miserable extremity! The vessel neared us: she proved to be the *Agenoria*, an American. She put out a boat to our assistance without any hesitation, though the weather was so rough at the time that there was danger of its being swamped in the humane effort, and the crew actually came in their shirts. We were saved! I was lifted on board. We were all treated with the utmost kindness, and taken into Cork. And there 's an end of my story, messmates. I 'll just thank ye for a quid, Mr. Whitehead."

CHAPTER XLV.

CAN I BE WRONG?

"Before the spirit of Bethesda's pool
Gave healing power the waters first were moved."
RIGHT HON. T. SPRING RICE
(*when Chancellor of the Exchequer, now Lord Monteagle*).

SHUDDERING at this awful tale, which I knew to be too true in every horrible detail, I returned to my cabin, moody, and—shall I confess it?—half frightened, and quite nervous, for almost the first time in my life. Could it be possible that my heart was softening? Had the contact with my fellow-men during this long voyage begun to exercise upon me a harmonising influence? Did I begin to feel myself a responsible being? Shall I confess it?—I shuddered at the thought. What if all my life had been on a wrong construction? What if my hardened soul was leading me downwards to a sure perdition? What if I found I should have to repent? What if the basis of my life was, after all, hollow, unsubstantial, delusive, rotten?

I looked towards my wife—she who believed in me, trusted me, pinned all her faith on me, loved me—she to whom I was all a lie. What if she knew me? What if my children——

Ah! at that moment, one of them quitted her kn

and, tossing back its golden curls, came innocently—— Innocently! Be still, my thoughts!—hushed the voice, the roaring of the flames of that hell within my bosom! —buried deep, deep—the reflection that I am not worthy to touch that child in its innocence! She comes—bright eyes, smiling lips, loving words—to repeat to me "some pretty verses mamma has just taught me." She speaks: the melody of birds—the hymn of angels—the chanted praise of Heaven!

"What is it, my love? Say on."

"The hurricane was at its worst,
The waves dashed mountains high,
When from a gallant ship there burst,
A loud and fearful cry.
The captain's son sat on the deck,
A young and lovely child;
And when they spoke of certain wreck,
He shook his head and smiled.
'Mid groans of care and deep despair,
And manhood's bitter tear,
That gentle boy all hope and joy,
Betrayed no signs of fear.

"A mariner, who strove in vain
To nerve his troubled soul,
Thought of his wife and babes with pain,
Nor could his fears control;
Approached the boy, and with a loud
And almost angry tone,
'Tell me,' he cried, 'art thou endowed
With courage all thine own?
Dost thou defy, or doubt the sky
Hath power to overwhelm?'
The gentle child looked up and smiled,
'My Father's at the Helm!'

"Oh! could we think as that bless'd child,
While wandering here below,
We should not dread the tempest wild,
The storm of mortal woe;
The waves of misery might dash
Above our little bark,
And human wrath like lightning flash,
Then leave our life-track dark.
His soul all calm, no thoughts of harm
The Christian overwhelm,
Firm in the thought, with safety fraught,
His Father's at the Helm!"

She ceased, and looked up to me with her sunny eyes for praise. I pressed her to my heart, and—the rock was broken by that gentle rod. I wept!

CHAPTER THE LAST.

HOME AT LAST!

"Get thee hence, nor come again,
Pass and cease to move about,
Pass then death, like type of pain,
Mix not memory with doubt;
'Tis the blot upon the brain,
That will show itself without."

ALFRED TENNYSON.

HOME at last! We are off Kinsale, the sea as calm as a mill-pond. I have landed my wife and children here at Queenstown, in the *Stormy Petrel* pilot vessel, and my young Australian friend with them. I am going on to Liverpool myself, for there is a gold cargo on board, and I may have something to say to it before we altogether part company. I know the secret hiding-place; and I believe such is my intense propensity for acquisition, that I could even rob a lawyer of his watch while he was making my will. I can't help it.

"*Half-past Four.*—We are abreast of Holyhead, at five miles' distance. There is a strong breeze blowing, but we are steaming steadily, head to wind.

"*Half-past Seven.*—We are nearing the Skerries. The wind has increased to a gale.

"*Eight o'clock.*—A thick haze. We are firing rockets and blue lights—signals for a pilot, they tell us. I fear they are signals of distress. We are hugging the shore too closely. Perhaps—— Can it be possible that they can't keep her off?

"*Ten o'clock,* P.M.—Still the same precautions. We sight the lights of Port Lynas, at four miles' distance. The gale has increased to a hurricane.

"*Eleven o'clock.*—The ship cannot hold her own. She drifts in the pressure of the storm-way. The tempest is raging and furious. They have let go the port anchor, and the starboard also. She rides safely.

"*Midnight.*—Captain Taylor comes into our cabin to tell us that the cables hold well, and that there is no danger.

"*Half-past Two.*—The chain cable of the port anchor has parted.

"*Half-past Three.*—An hour of agonising fear—the whirling and whistling of the wind tearing through the cordage—the knowledge that our vessel is drifting! She has struck on the sands!

"*Four o'clock,* A.M.—Captain Taylor and Captain Withers again visit us. They tell the ladies not to be afraid, as they will be able to walk ashore in ten minutes. The ship, they say, is firmly imbedded in the sands.

"*Five o'clock.*—She has struck on the rocks! Ah, that bumping! She is beating herself to pieces. They are all at prayer with the Rev. Mr. Lodge in

the saloon cabin. The scene is fearful! A brave fellow, a Maltese sailor—Joe Rogers they call him—has got ashore with a line. They are passing over. They call me! No! At this moment no one watches the treasure. I will go down, and then——"

Here the journal closes. What is known of Mr. Horsleydown's fate is, that when last seen, he was coming up the companion-ladder with a heavy iron box in his arms. At that moment the ship divided in two, a wave broke over the deck, and he jumped overboard. It is supposed that the weight of the box must have carried him down, as his body was not recovered for several days, and was then only distinguishable by the remnants of his clothes, and the iron box containing gold—which, however, belonged to the vessel, and not to Mr. Horsleydown—locked firmly in his death-grasp.

FINIS.

Winchester: Printed by Hugh Barclay.